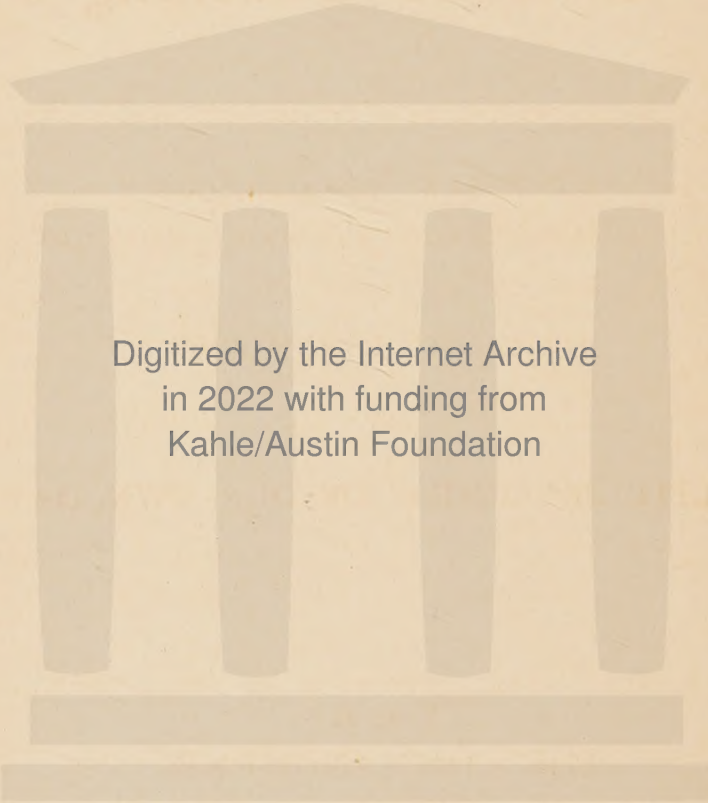


Jack W. Cottrell
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A Pulpit Commentary

ON

Catholic Teaching

A COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF
CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT

IN

ORIGINAL DISCOURSES

BY

PULPIT PREACHERS OF OUR OWN DAY

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THE COMMANDMENTS
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Archbishop of New York

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THE CATHOLIC TEACHING, IN DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND CULT

Vol. II. The Commandments

I. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE CHRISTIAN RULE OF LIFE

BY THE VERY REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.S.S.R.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—Matt. xix, 17.

SYNOPSIS.—The young man's question, the most important of all questions for each one. Faith without works insufficient for salvation.

I. The Ten Commandments, the Christian rule of life. They are the expression of the natural law, binding on all men, determining and regulating each one's duties toward God, toward himself and toward his neighbor. Each Commandment is both positive and negative, prescribing certain good actions and forbidding certain evil ones. The Commandments are more especially binding on Christians.

II. Motives for keeping the Commandments: 1. The express will of God; 2. the love of God, inseparable from the keeping of the Commandments; 3. gratitude to God; 4. earthly peace and contentment; 5. the means of gaining heaven.

III. We must keep all the Commandments without exception. A grievous sin to break any Commandment in an important matter, and thus forfeit salvation.

IV. Keeping the Commandments not a degrading slavery, but most honorable, ennobling and elevating human nature; not too difficult an obligation, but an obligation within our power and even comparatively easy, if we but have a good will and pray for grace to perform what we can not do of ourselves. They are a help to us even in this life, as wings are an indispensable help to a bird.

Exhortation to have a good will, to meditate often on the Commandments and make an examination of conscience thereon. The example of David and of the martyrs.

A young man one day addressed this question to our divine Saviour: "What good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?" Jesus replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix, 16, 17). There is no more important question for each one of us than that which this young man asked Our Lord, for the salvation of our immortal soul, the possession and enjoyment of life everlasting, is our end, our final destiny. All other things are only secondary to our eternal salvation. To secure it we must have faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi, 6), and "he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi, 16). But faith, to be a genuine saving faith, to conduce to and effect salvation, must be a living, active and practical faith. If our faith is not a

rule of life for us, if it does not produce corresponding works, it is practically dead, for, says St. James (ii, 14, 17, 26), "what shall it profit, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? . . . Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself . . . Even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead;" that is, such a faith is useless for securing our salvation. Our divine Redeemer declares that heaven can be gained only by doing the will of God, for He says: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. vii, 21). The good works required for salvation are those prescribed by the commandments of God, for when the young man had asked Jesus, "what *good* shall I *do*, that I may have life everlasting," Jesus replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." From these words it is evident that the Commandments of God are for us all, the Christian rule of life.

I. Our divine Saviour abolished the Jewish legal sacrifices, ceremonies and customs, but not the Ten Commandments solemnly promulgated on Mount Sinai. On the contrary, He confirmed them, making, as we have just heard, their observance the indispensable condition of salvation. "Do not think," He said, "I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am come, not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v, 17).

The Ten Commandments are the essence and expression of the natural law imposed by the Almighty and All-wise Creator to govern and regulate the conduct of man in accordance with his nature, his obligations, his final end. They are also the rule of all human actions, of all human laws. Civil laws, the precepts of parents, of superiors, that do not conform to the Ten Commandments, are unjust, can impose no obligation, must not be obeyed, for, as the apostles rightly said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v, 29). When there is a doubt as to the justice of human laws, of human commands, the Church is divinely empowered to decide whether they may be lawfully obeyed, and her decisions in such matters are binding on the conscience of every one.

The Commandments of God are our rule of life, for they determine and regulate our duties toward God, toward ourselves and toward our neighbor. They are, as Our Lord declares, reducible to the two great Commandments of the love of God and of the love

of our neighbor as ourselves. The first three Commandments regard our duties toward God, and the other seven regard our obligations toward our neighbor and our own selves. The Ten Commandments may be summed up in these words of the Apostle: "Avoid evil and do good" (I Pet. iii, 11).

Each Commandment forbids certain evil actions or thoughts, and prescribes certain good actions or thoughts. The prohibition of evil is obligatory at all times and everywhere; no person, no power, can lawfully dispense from such prohibition, or allow or prescribe what is evil, *v. g.*, hatred of the neighbor, false oaths, drunkenness, adultery, etc. Each Commandment, in so far as it prescribes some good to be done, is obligatory only at certain times, on the occasions that occur of performing the good prescribed, *v. g.*, acts of obedience to superiors, of charity toward the neighbor, of divine worship, etc. If we truly love God, we shall find no great difficulty in observing the Commandments, for, says our divine Saviour, "if any one love me, he will keep my word" (John xiv, 23), that is, my Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are as binding on us as on the Israelites of old, for, says St. Paul, "circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing; but the observance of the commandments of God" (I Cor. vii, 19). This means that the keeping of the Commandments of God is the only important, necessary and indispensable obligation for all men without exception. Nay, even more; as Christians, we have a far stricter obligation to keep them than the Jews, since the Christian religion is as superior to the Jewish as the reality is superior to the figure. It behooves us Christians, therefore, to keep the Commandments more perfectly than was required of the Jews, since our holy religion requires us to be more perfect than they: "For I tell you," says our beloved Redeemer, "that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven . . . Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v, 20, 48).

II. We have many powerful motives for keeping the Commandments. In the first place, we should keep them because it is the express will of God. He orders us to "keep the commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). He has made us for heaven, but says expressly that we cannot gain heaven without keeping the Commandments. The Holy Ghost tells us: "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is all man" (Eccles. xii, 13), that is, it is the whole duty

of man. Secondly, we are commanded to love God with our whole heart and soul, with our whole mind, with all our strength. But we can not truly love Him, unless we keep His Commandments, for our divine Saviour says: "If you love me, keep my commandments . . . He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John xiv, 15, 21). Hence, he who wilfully breaks a Commandment, does not really love God. Thirdly, we should keep the Commandments out of gratitude to God, for He is our greatest benefactor, and to Him we owe all that we have and all that we are. "God so loved the world," says Jesus Christ, "as to give his only-begotten Son . . . that the world might be saved by him" (John iii, 16, 17). For love of us "God," says St. Paul, "did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us" (Rom. viii, 32). And the Son of God "loved us and delivered himself up for us" (Eph. v, 2), dying a most cruel and shameful death, to save us. He could not have shown us greater love, for He Himself tells us that "greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends" (John xv, 13). And Christ laid down His life for us, who were His enemies, through our sins. Gratitude demands that we love Him in return, striving to please Him in all things, and carefully shunning whatever might cause Him the least displeasure. We can do this only by faithfully keeping the Commandments. In the next place, our earthly peace and contentment require it, for, asks holy Job (ix, 4), "who resisted God, and hath had peace?" Disobedience to God's law is a source of uneasiness, of unhappiness. The good Christian, even amid poverty, afflictions, disease, misfortune and other trials, however great they may be, is not unhappy, but enjoys a peace of mind and a contentment which the world can neither impart nor take away, and which, as experience proves, is denied to the sinner amid his apparent happiness, amid the honors, riches and pleasures of the world, for in them the sinner, like Solomon, actually finds only "vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccles. i, 14). Finally, heaven, with its ineffable joys and perfect happiness can be gained only by faithfully keeping the Commandments. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). Such is the express teaching of our divine Saviour.

III. We must keep all the Commandments without exception, for St. James declares (ii, 10), "whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." This means that the

breaking of any of the Commandments in a matter of importance, will prevent us from entering heaven, although we may faithfully observe all the other Commandments. To transgress a Commandment in some important point is a grievous sin, which inflicts spiritual death on the soul, and forfeits all rights to heaven. Just as the lesion of a vital organ causes the death of the body, although all the other vital organs may remain sound, so also the violation of one important Commandment brings death to the soul although the other Commandments may have been faithfully observed. Hell, in fact, is full of Christians who kept some of the Commandments, who never, *v. g.*, committed murder, theft or adultery, who never got drunk, but either slandered or hated their neighbor, or yielded to lustful thoughts and desires, etc.

Sin, which is committed by transgressing the Commandments, is the cause of all the evils, sufferings, misfortunes and calamities, which abound in the world. They are the fruits, the punishment of sin in this life. In the next life the punishment of light sins consists in the fearful pains of purgatory, and of grievous sins, the endless torments and despair of hell.

IV. Some deluded persons look upon the obligation of keeping the Commandments as a sort of slavery, as degrading to human nature. But nothing is more ennobling, or better adapted to impart to men the true liberty of the children of God than the faithful observance of God's Commandments. He who transgresses a Commandment commits sin and yields either to the suggestions of Satan, to the deceits of the world, or to his own base passions. He thus debases himself, becomes the slave of Satan, of the wicked world, or of his own animal passions, and thus degrades his own noble human nature. "Whosoever committeth sin," says our Lord, "is the slave of sin" (John viii, 34). On the other hand, he who keeps the Commandments, overcomes the devil, conquers the world, subdues his own passions, and submits only to the God of infinite power and perfection, who alone is above him, and thus complies with the law of his nature and attains his end. Hence, as the Church says, to obey and serve God, to keep His Commandments, is actually to *reign*, to rule over everything that tends to degrade the nobility of man's nature. Nothing in this world can then be more ennobling than the faithful observance of the Commandments of God.

God loves and distinguishes those who keep His Commandments. To them He says: "You are my friends, if you do the things that

I command you" (John xv, 14). What an honor to be considered by God Himself as a friend! Nay, even more; Jesus Christ holds them so dear, that He hesitates not to say: "Whoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, my sister, my mother" (Mark iii, 35).

Many persons pretend that the Commandments are too difficult to keep. Not a few refuse to believe in the Catholic religion, not so much, in truth, on account of its mysteries, as on account of the obligation of keeping the Commandments; were the Church to allow them to act as they like and to dispense them from the observance of the Commandments, they would most readily accept all her doctrines and become Catholics. But this the Church neither will nor may do, hence they never become Catholics. In like manner some fallen-away Catholics try to justify their course under the plea that they can no longer believe the doctrines they so willingly believed so long as they kept the Commandments and practised their religion; but it is evident that the real reason of their giving up the faith is that they fear the Commandments and the obligation of confessing, combating and overcoming their weakness in yielding to their passions and transgressing the Commandments. They prefer giving up their faith to giving up their passions!

The Commandments, though difficult of observance in themselves, are not beyond the power of those who have a good will, of those who are not moral cowards. Jesus Christ, who is Truth itself, tells us clearly: "Take up my yoke upon you . . . for my yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Matt. xi, 30, 31); and St. John (I Jo. v. 3) tells us that "His commandments are not heavy." Their observance does not exceed our strength, for, in the first place, God, being infinitely just, wise and good, can not and will not lay on us intolerable burdens; secondly, however difficult His Commandments may appear to our human weakness, He will make them easy for us, if we but ask Him for the necessary strength. "God," says St. Augustine, "does not command impossible things, but He admonishes us to do what we can of ourselves, and to ask Him for grace to do what is beyond our power, and He gives His grace to all who pray for it," so that, as St. Paul says, each one may be able to say: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil iv, 13). Thirdly, how many as weak as we, beset by even greater passions and more violent temptations, have, by their earnest efforts aided by God's grace, perfectly kept the Commandments, and become great saints! What they were able to perform, what so many, in

our own day, can effect, we also can do, if we only have a serious and sincere good will to do all in our power and to beseech God to help us to do what we feel unable to accomplish of ourselves.

The Commandments are not an obstacle to us in this life, but rather a powerful help. They are to us what wings are to a bird. These, whilst adding weight to the bird, do not impede it in its flight; on the contrary, they are indispensable to enable the bird to fly. A bird with its wings cut off is perfectly helpless and unable to fly. In like manner, if we cut off, or break the Commandments, we become not only useless in the world, but even injurious to ourselves, to our neighbor, to society itself by our wickedness and evil example, and are spiritually helpless to reach heaven.

Let us have a good will, let us cheerfully keep God's Commandments, for, says St. Paul, "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. xi, 7). Let us not imitate the sick who refuse to take the prescribed remedies, or who take them only with reluctance. Let us keep the Commandments of our good God, not because it is the only way to escape the torments of hell; but let us keep them out of love of God, who is so full of love for us, from a desire, a longing to gain heaven and then share the very happiness of God, our Creator, our Father, our greatest benefactor, our best friend, who loves us exceedingly, and we shall find their yoke sweet and their burden light.

That we may the more faithfully keep the Commandments, let us often reflect on them, on the duties they impose upon us, and examine our conscience as to how we observe them, in what points we transgress them, and how we may avoid further transgressions. Let us imitate David, who loved the Commandments, because he loved God; who constantly meditated upon them, in order to be guided and ruled by them. He exclaims: "O how have I loved thy law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day. Through thy Commandments thou hast made me wiser than all my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have understood more than all my teachers; because thy testimonies are my meditation. I have had understanding above ancients; because I have sought thy Commandments. I have restrained my feet from every evil way; that I may keep thy words. I have not declined from thy judgment, because thou hast set me a law. How sweet are thy words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth. By thy Commandments I have had understanding; therefore have I hated every way of iniquity. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths. I have sworn and am

determined to keep the judgments of thy justice" (Ps. cxviii, 97-106). Were we, like David, to meditate often and earnestly on the Commandments, and make every effort to observe them faithfully, we should also be able to speak like David. When about to die, he sent for Solomon, his son and successor, to give him his parting advice. He insisted especially on one thing: "Show thyself a man," he said, "and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to observe his precepts" (III Kings ii, 2, 3). Take this admonition to yourselves, saying: "Show thyself a true Christian, keep the charge of the Lord thy God, walk in his ways and observe his commandments."

This we will cheerfully do if we really love God. A lover finds nothing too difficult when there is a question of avoiding what may displease his beloved, of doing what may cause pleasure to the one he loves. In like manner, if we really love God above all things; if, like the saints, we are enamored of God, we shall love Him as the saints did, and shall find no sacrifice too great when there is a question of avoiding His displeasure or of pleasing Him. In fact, to be able faithfully to keep God's every Commandment, it behooves us to be willing to make every sacrifice, however painful to nature, to be ready to undergo every loss, every suffering, and even to shed all our blood and give up our life as the martyrs did. That they might not break any of God's Commandments, and especially the first, which forbids giving divine honors to any one but God, millions, not only of strong men, but of weak women and children, suffered the loss of their goods, imprisonment in fetid dungeons, fearful tortures, and cruel deaths! We should be ready to imitate them, were it necessary for the keeping of the Commandments! When we are tempted to transgress any of the Commandments, let us reflect for a moment on hell and its endless torments, to which such a transgression exposes us! Or, rather, let us then look up to heaven, to the beautiful heaven, where God, our loving Father, dwells, to that abode of delights and joys unspeakable, where endless happiness awaits those who, during their short term of life, faithfully keep the Commandments, and this will persuade us that heaven is well worth all our efforts, all our sacrifices! Yes, dear brethren, look up to heaven, and behold the glorious crown promised to those who keep the Commandments of God, for He says to each one of us: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii, 10).

II. THE LOVE OF GOD AND OF THE NEIGHBOR

BY THE REV. WILLIAM L. SULLIVAN, C.S.P.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."—Matt. xxii, 37-39.

SYNOPSIS.—Narration of the circumstances connected with the giving of the great commandment. The last week of Our Lord's ministry; the attitude of the Pharisees; their motive, etc. Christ's attitude and His answer. The beauty and telling effect of Christ's talk on this occasion. God loves His creatures, therefore they should love Him. External signs of God's perfections should bring us to love God. The spiritual nature within us draws us to the love of God. Steadfast resolution and courageous loyalty needed. This commandment leads us to a high and holy life. Love of our neighbor follows directly from the love of our God. The reason is that all are one in the family of God.

Before entering into the consideration of these words of Our Lord, let us see in what circumstances they were spoken. They belong to the closing days of Our Lord's life, to the last week, in fact, of His earthly ministry. That ministry was largely carried on in His native province of Galilee, in northern Palestine. There He began His preaching; there He wrought most of His miracles; there He gained the larger part of His followers and disciples. Reports of His wonderful deeds and divine preaching reached Jerusalem, where the leaders of Judaism and the students of the Mosaic law principally lived; and these men became intensely curious to see Jesus and to examine Him. They were His enemies from the beginning, for they had heard enough about Him from spies and informers, to understand that He was attacking the very foundations of their Pharisaism, and was delivering to the people a new Gospel, which was beautiful and holy indeed, but which left little place for the externalism of rite and ceremony which the Pharisees had carried to such extreme. But they wished to discover for themselves the secret of Christ's power, to test His wisdom, to investigate His principles and purposes. So when Our Lord set forth on His last memorable journey to Jerusalem, the Jewish leaders awaited His coming with intense anxiety and

curiosity. Christ entered the city, you remember, on Palm Sunday, and at once began teaching in the Temple. The great men of Israel, both rigid Pharisees and liberal Sadducees, flocked about Him, asking a multitude of questions. The disputes of the Rabbis, the problems of Jewish theology, the controversies between Pharisee and Sadducee, they put before Him, striving both to get His point of view in these matters, and also to entrap Him in His speech. Thus they inquired of Him what was the source of His own authority; what He thought of paying tribute to the pagan Roman Caesar; what He held concerning the resurrection; and doubtless on many other difficult points, on which they were themselves divided, they examined Him. In the course of this questioning, the Pharisees came to Him one day, and through one of their learned men asked Him what was the greatest of all the Commandments given by Moses to the Jews.

Their motive in asking this was not a religious motive. They simply wanted to know what was Our Lord's opinion upon a point of dispute in the schools of the Rabbis. Doubtless the learned Scribes had often discussed the question, and could come to no agreement upon it. Some of them may have thought that the greatest Commandment was the keeping of the Sabbath; others, that it was the law of sacrifice; still others, that it was the precept of ceremonial purification. Some such diversity seems to have existed among them; and so they approached the young Prophet of Galilee, curious to know what side He would take.

Christ had no interest in the petty and ridiculous controversies of their schools. His soul was too great and spiritual to be concerned with these academic debates which had no bearing upon inward righteousness. We can easily picture Him to ourselves as He stood before His questioners that day. There they were, the learned Rabbis, the studious schoolmasters of Jewish theology, their poor narrow minds given over to vain and profitless speculation, to idle and fanciful interpretations of the letter of the law, while they missed its spirit and life. And there before them, submitting to be catechized, as they would catechize their pupils, was He, whose mind and heart were fixed upon the infinite, and dwelling in purest love with God. The answer that He gave them was no controversial word, no partisan argument, no contentious opinion, but the eternal truth by which He lived, and to deliver which He had come into the world: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy

God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How they must have been abashed by this reply, those erudite doctors of the law! How, when they had heard it, they must have walked away, to ponder upon what manner of man this was, who knew the soul of religion so well, and cared so little for its dialectics and debates!

What other answer, indeed, could Christ have given? His whole career was a preparation for the answering of that question. The truth that filled His life, that He was ever striving to teach to the dull understanding of men, was that they had a Father in Heaven. In a score of ways He framed this abiding principle of His Gospel. So that it might live in other hearts, as it lived within His own. He pointed to the lilies of the field, and told His audience on the Mount, that the good God had clothed these flowers with all their loveliness. He called attention to the birds that sang about them as He preached, and bade them reflect that even of these small creatures the benignant God took care. He reminded them that the warm sun and the refreshing rain were of God's vouchsafing to His children. He took a little child to His embrace and told the people that God's kingdom was of such. He opened up all the sorrows of our humanity, poverty, and mourning, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and persecution for conscience sake, and sin—and never wearied of insisting that God in infinite compassion took account of these, and was waiting to bestow upon us consolation, recompense and pardon. That God is love unceasing, goodness without end, and mercy inexhaustible and untiring, is Christ's perpetually reiterated teaching. And if God is thus lovable, it follows by necessity that it is our highest privilege and holiest duty to love him.

Here, then, is the greatest Commandment in the religion of Christ—to love God. It is addressed to us and laid upon us, for we are believers in and followers of Christ. How shall we fulfill it? How are we to love God? Our Lord Himself points out the way, as the instances which we have just given of His teaching indicate. His method was to direct the minds of men to things created, things visible and observable, in which some reflection of God's beauty, power and goodness shines forth, and from these things, to lift us up to the thoughts of that perfection which is

uncreated and infinite. From the good which we can behold and measure, we are to rise to its divine source—the good which is in God and is God. Let us adopt this manner of approaching our heavenly Father, stepping upward toward Him, guided by the vestiges of divinity which lie around us and within.

Of the signs of God's admirable perfections which appear in the physical world, I do not now intend to speak. Those signs are splendid and impressive proofs, indeed, of the greatness and goodness of the Infinite Spirit who has created and rules the universe. In the orderly adjustment of all things, working together under harmonious law, there is wonderful wisdom; in the unfailing succession of times and seasons, whereby life is sustained, and given its alternate hours of labor and repose, there is beneficent providence; in the sublime beauty of the face of Nature there is a clear intimation of the surpassing loveliness which must exist in the splendor of eternal light; and in the mighty forces and awful magnitudes of suns and systems and worlds innumerable, there is vast and almighty power. So striking are these physical evidences of God, that to many higher souls the world is a temple of Divinity, and they walk within it, reverent and worshipful, as in the presence of the Most High.

But to-day, let us consider another order of things wherein we may see reflections of God, and, seeing them, may find Him in whose borrowed light they shine. Let us enter the sphere of the spiritual, as revealed in our higher nature, and there seek such signs of God as may lift our hearts to Him in love. All men, except the most utterly depraved, love goodness. They cannot help loving it. Even when they do not themselves practise it, they retain for it a respect and admiration which are at least a beginning and small measure of love. Let a man stand forth who is suffering for truth or struggling for morality against heavy odds, and the world's heart goes out to him. Let a hero give his life in supreme self-sacrifice for some holy cause, and men will speak his name with bowed heads, and the hardest of heart will venerate him. Let an unfortunate one be stricken down, let the innocent be in distress; let unprotected purity be in peril, and a hundred hands reach out in assistance and defense. The true, the noble, the unselfish, the kind, the chaste, make irresistible appeal to human hearts, for there is some common ground between all holy ideals of goodness and our spiritual nature. That common ground is God. God

is the sum and completion of goodness. Whatever is good is good by resemblance to Him who is the source and archtype of good. Whatever is good He infinitely loves, and this impulse to love the good He has communicated to us in making us in His image and likeness. We are kindred to goodness because kindred to God; and, in loving it, we share in an essential attribute of the All-Holy.

Here, then, we are on the way of an easy ascent to the love of God. Let us love God as reflected in the holiness within our reach, and recognize that He is the source of it, and we shall be loving Him in Himself. Obey conscience, revere purity, worship truth, hold fast to honesty, practise charity, convince yourselves that the moral and spiritual side of life is supreme; get a right understanding of the sacred duty of fidelity to the moral law, and of the awful degradation of violating it; resolve to give your life in a kind of consecration to virtue and to the cultivation of a spiritual character so strong and brave and beautiful as to draw down upon you the approval and benediction of the heavenly Father. Do this and you shall be fulfilling the first and the greatest Commandment.

It will often be hard to do this. For while, as I have said, we admire and love virtue, and display that love in any great moral crisis, still, in the common life of every day we are apt to let it slumber within the soul and remain inefficacious and unfruitful. But, to make it constant, to put it into daily practise, to guide our thoughts, words and deeds in the light of it—this requires steadfast resolution, courageous loyalty to the spirit as opposed to the flesh, sincere and fervent prayer.

You see, then, that love of God means living a high and holy life. It means achieving those qualities of inner righteousness which, we all acknowledge, constitute the integrity of admirable character. It is not a laborious striving of the mind after a vague and distant object; it is not an emotional excitement of which only the sentimental are capable. It is rather the power and strength of noble character; the firm will of a loyal spirit; the devout submission of an unselfish heart to the divine behest of duty. Surely it is not too much to ask us thus to love God. It is perfecting ourselves by loving the All Perfect. It is a clear call to us from heaven above and from our own best nature within. Follow it; love whatever thing is good and God-like; hate whatever thing is base and wrong. You will find by so living that Christ will grow nearer to you;

for it is of Him that we are to learn these higher lessons of the soul, and in Him that we are to see the great example of pure love, of generous self-surrender, and of fidelity to God—a fidelity that led Him without fear to ignominy, the scourge and the Cross. You will find that God's ways will justify themselves when you strive to love Him. You will grow in the spirit of trust, and in abandonment to His Providence. You will gain unalterable peace. And perhaps at some blessed moments it may be given you to rise even higher—to enjoy that inner union with the Divine Spirit, that mystical communion with the Father of all, which is the privilege of the saints, and a foreshadowing of the happiness which is to come.

Love of one another is the second part of Christ's twofold Commandment. But the understanding of the second part follows directly upon knowledge of the first. True love of God brings with it true love of man. Love of God is utterly inconsistent with any kind of hate, except hate for what is essentially evil. Devotion to the Father cannot be separated from tender regard for the Father's children, even the foolish and the wayward. With love of God comes a largeness of mind, a magnanimity, a tolerance, a patience, a gentleness, that will clothe us about as with a mantle of charity. The small vexations which we inflict upon one another, the harassing imperfections which we find in one another, and even the graver injuries, with which a neighbor's hand may hurt us—these it will be possible to overlook in the measure wherewith we have learned Christ's lesson of pure and perfect love.

This lesson let us strive to learn. Let us go to Him, the Master, as pupils that are eager to learn. Look upon Him in His spiritual strength and beauty. Hear Him as He speaks so gently and so wisely, the words of eternal life and everlasting love. Be of the number of His true disciples, and you will find as life goes on that His yoke is sweet and His burden light—made sweet and light by love, which shows us a Father in heaven, and brothers all about us upon earth.

III. THE VIRTUE OF FAITH

BY RIGHT REV. MGR. CANON JOHN S. VAUGHAN

SYNOPSIS.—*Faith the foremost if not the most meritorious of the virtues. Its definition, its analysis. The necessity of knowledge for the supernatural as well as for the natural life. Knowledge acquired in various ways but chiefly through the testimony of others. Examples of this. The reasonableness of faith depends upon the trustworthiness of the authority revealing. Knowledge of the things necessary for eternal life can not be acquired by man's own industry, but must come from God. The necessity of faith seen from Scripture and reason. Motives urging the exercise of this virtue, 1. because God is Infinite Truth and worthy of all trust; 2. no other way of acquiring what is absolutely necessary; 3. by faith we offer complete homage of our intellect and of our will; 4. love and gratitude urge us on this point. Exhortation to watch over and guard our faith; to live up to it and thus give good example and lead others to the true Church.*

Of all virtues, to be exercised by a devout Catholic, the first and foremost is faith. When we say the first, we do not mean the highest or the most meritorious, for, in those respects both hope and charity, no doubt, surpass it. We mean merely that it is the first, in the chronological order, and the most essential. That it is the most essential is clearly proved from the fact that, until we possess faith, it is impossible to advance to the exercise of hope or of charity, or indeed of any other supernatural virtue whatsoever.

A mansion may be a much more magnificent thing, in itself, than the rude foundation on which it rests; yet, without the foundation there can never be a mansion at all. So, in a similar way other virtues may be, and are, sublime and more admirable than faith; yet, without faith they could never exist at all. From this we can readily understand the force of the apostle's teaching, viz.: "without faith, it is impossible to please God."

But, what is faith? Before giving a direct answer to this important question, it will be well to make some preliminary remarks, which will help us to realize the situation more clearly.

Man possesses two great gifts, viz., intellect and free-will. Both have their own special sphere of action; both are necessary for man's well being. If we compare man to a machine, then the will may be described as the driving power, and the intellect as the di-

recting power. Without the will, he can not move at all; without the intellect, he may, indeed, move, but he would not know whither to direct his movements. If I liken myself to a ship, then my "will" would be represented by the powerful engines that urge the vessel on, through the ocean; and my "intellect" would be represented by the compass, which points out the way, and enables me to steer along the proper course and to reach my objective in safety. The motive power, however great, would be of no avail, unless the route were made manifest. Knowledge is essential.

Now, this holds good, whether I am guiding a material bark across the ocean, from one port to another, or whether I am guiding my immaterial, immortal soul from earth to heaven, across the tempestuous sea of the present life.

In both cases, knowledge is a requisite, as a means to an end. But, taking knowledge in the broadest sense, we may ask, how is it arrived at? In various ways. There are some truths that we can learn by the mere exercise of our senses. That the grass is green; that birds fly; that the sun shines, are truths that we learn from personal observation. So again: that fire burns; that water quenches thirst, and that roses smell sweet, are all propositions certified to by direct experience. Other truths, of a less obvious kind, I may also acquire, without help from any one else, by the mere exercise of my reason.

Thus I need no one to tell me that the whole of any object is greater than a mere part; or that things, which are equal to the same thing, are equal to one another; and so forth. Further, by a process of mere ratiocination, I may advance to the discovery of many new truths, as is done in mathematics and geometry.

But, in spite of all these means of information, there is no doubt but that our chief source of knowledge is neither our own reasoning nor our personal observation, but rather the testimony of others. Of all the knowledge we now possess, by far the greater portion comes to us on the authority of outsiders. Thus, to take a few examples; I know that China exists, and India, and Japan. I know that Caesar was a great general, and that he wrote certain commentaries; and that Napoleon was a mighty commander, and was taken prisoner, and died at St. Helena. I know, further, that the earth turns on its axis, and that the succession of summer and winter is caused by the revolution of the earth round the sun. How do I know these, and countless other

similar facts? I have acquired them by no personal industry. They all come to me on the testimony of other persons. I accept them without hesitation and without doubt; *but simply and solely upon authority.*

Now, the acceptance of a statement, upon the authority of another, is what is called *faith*; and the character of that faith will vary, with the character and reliability of the authority invoked.

If the authority be human, then faith is simply human faith. If the authority be divine, then the faith is divine faith. Hence, we may define Divine Faith to be *the acceptance of any statements, on the authority of God.*

Now comes the question: Is faith reasonable? Is it right and just that we should submit our intellect to another, and accept statement after statement on his simple assurance? Our answer is: It depends. If the authority on which we rest is trustworthy, then we are acting with wisdom and prudence; if not, then we are acting foolishly.

A simple servant girl meets a wandering gypsy, who promises to tell her her fortune, if she will but cross her hand with a shilling. She firmly believes her words. Why? Simply because she is old and ugly and has a hooked nose and wears a sugar-loaf hat. In this case the servant girl does, indeed, exercise faith, but it is a most ill-founded and unreasonable faith. It rests on a tottering foundation.

On the other hand; instead of a foolish serving maid, take a prudent man, who lies sick, but wishes to get well. After due inquiry, he calls to his bedside the most learned physician he can find—who has already won for himself a high reputation in his own profession. He not only asks his advice, but he believes his words, puts himself into his hands, and carefully follows out all his directions. In a word, he “exercises faith” in his physician. He believes his words, and acts upon them. This is not an unreasonable, but a most reasonable and proper faith; and though it is merely human faith, its exercise is dictated by prudence and approved by common sense. The foundation here is practically firm and secure.

The physician has made a life-long study of the human body and of the various diseases to which it is exposed, and is able to give me valuable information concerning my special ailment and concerning the rules I must follow in order to recover my lost health and strength. This knowledge, which I can acquire in no other way, is

invaluable; still, it has to do only with my bodily health; *i. e.*, only with the inferior part of my being. It has nothing to do with that which is immeasurably more important, *viz.*, with my soul.

If this world were the only world, such mere human faith and such mere physical knowledge might suffice. But we have immortal souls. We are destined to live on and on, for ever, in a future world. Therefore, it is essential that we should know both what we have to do and what we have to avoid in order to become entitled to a place in the kingdom of heaven—when this world shall have vanished away.

So soon as ever I learn that eternal life is offered to me, I wish to know if the offer depends on any special conditions. If I am answered in the affirmative I at once feel the necessity of learning what those conditions are. Is sin, for instance, an insurmountable barrier to my entrance into heaven? If so, then I have to ask a further question, *viz.*, how is sin to be remitted and washed out? These, and a thousand similar points must be determined, and set at rest, before I can feel any security of salvation.

Now, how am I to get answers to these most practical and pressing questions?

They are questions, kindly observe, that differ from all others, especially in two respects. In the first place, by reason of their tremendous importance. For they concern our most personal and vital interests. They are connected with the state and condition of our souls, not during the brief moments of our present existence, but during the limitless ages of eternity. They have to do with the rescuing us from everlasting torment, and the securing for us everlasting joy and happiness.

But if these questions differ from all others in importance, they differ from all others also in this, that no mere human teacher or philosopher, however clever and gifted, can hope to be able to solve them. They are questions which touch upon the most intimate nature and attributes of God, on His inscrutable providence, and on the end and purpose of our creation and destiny.

That is to say, the knowledge needed is not such that I or any man, however learned and wise, can acquire by his own industry. It is a knowledge, not only greater than the human mind can arrive at by study, but a knowledge of an altogether higher and sublimer order. It is supernatural, and falls not within the circle of earthly experience. It embraces many truths, which are wholly

above our comprehension, and many which depend wholly and solely upon the personal will and decree of an absolutely free God. Without some external aid, how shall we—how *can* we—arrive at a certain knowledge of such supernatural truths? “Hardly,” says the wise man, “hardly do we guess aright at things that are thrown upon the earth, and with labor do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who shall search?” (Wisdom ix, 16).

If we are ever to reach heaven, it is absolutely necessary that we should know the way there; but since, from the very nature of the case, it is wholly impossible for us to discover it of ourselves, God, in His infinite mercy, has been pleased to reveal it to us, and to enlighten our darkness. This is referred to by Isaias, when he says: “The people, that walked in darkness have seen a great light. To them who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, to them light is risen” (Isaias ix, 2). Similarly, when at a later date, Our Lord appearing to St. Paul, bade him carry the truths of the Gospel to the Gentiles, He declared that He sent him in order “to open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot amongst the saints” (Acts xxv, 18).

In these and other passages we clearly see (1), the necessity of a revelation on the part of Almighty God, and (2), of a firm *faith* upon our part, in what He reveals. What we cannot discover of ourselves He makes known to us, and by accepting these truths and acting upon them, we obtain, at last, eternal life.

The obligation of believing God is manifest, for, “if the testimony of man is great, the testimony of God is greater,” as St. John observes (I John v, 9), God is infinitely wise. He knows all things, and can neither deceive nor be deceived, so that there is no ground for doubt or hesitation. To call into question any statement made by God is to insult His infinite majesty, and to commit a most grave sin. Why? St. John himself gives us the reason. It is because “he that believeth not, maketh God a liar, since he believeth not the testimony which God hath given of his Son” (I John v, 10). Indeed, there is no sin so deadly, no sin that is so severely punished as the rejection of His doctrine, and the refusal to accept His teaching. When commissioning His Apostles to go and teach all nations those things which He had commanded them,

He made use of these emphatic words: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned."

On another occasion our blessed Lord spoke yet more severely concerning unbelievers, and added threats. After sending His Apostles to make known His saving doctrine far and wide, over the whole world, He breaks forth in these memorable and truly awful threats: "Whosoever shall not hear you, nor receive your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. x, 14).

The memory of the enormity of the crimes that disgraced the inhabitants of those cities is still fresh. Well, terrible though it was, Our Lord tells us that a worse fate awaits wilful unbelievers than awaited them. "It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah" than for unbelievers in the last day.

Hence, the Catholic Church, the very mouthpiece of Jesus Christ, has always taught faith in God's word to be a matter of spiritual life or death. To hold the faith is a condition of salvation. The denial of any single article is heresy; and heresy, in the mind of the Church, is classed with idolatry and apostasy. From the earliest Councils down to the very last, viz., that of the Vatican, assent to Catholic doctrine is required under pain of excommunication or *anathema*, and assent to heretical doctrine is reprobated, under the same spiritual censures. Further, the assent to the teachings of the Church must be interior and sincere, as well as outward and manifest.

There are four special motives urging us to exercise the great theological virtue of divine faith.

The first two and most obvious have already been referred to, viz., First, because God is the infinite truth, and is infinitely worthy of our trust and confidence. Second, because we can acquire in no other way the knowledge which is essential to our well-being in this world, and still more, to our well-being in the next. Third, in addition to these, there is a third, and that is because it is by the exercise of faith that we offer to God the complete homage and adoration of our intellect.

Our will is made subject to God, by obedience. We subject our will when we carry out the commands that He imposes upon us. We thereby acknowledge that He is master of our wills, and

that we owe Him the sacrifice of our personal desires and inclinations. But in all this our intellect takes no important share; and no violence is done to it. Our reason stands, as it were, apart and unconcerned. Yet our reason is one of God's greatest gifts to man, and should also acknowledge His sovereignty. It, too, must pay fealty. But how is this done? By the exercise of faith, that is to say, by forcing our reason to submit to God's revelation and to accept as true the various doctrines which He proposes, however difficult and however obscure they may seem to us. Just as we offer to God the sacrifice of our own wills, when we resist and overcome them to do God's will, so we offer Him, likewise, the sacrifice of our own intellect or reason when we resist and overcome its dictates, in order to accept the revelations of Almighty God, and prostrate our puny intellect in the dust before God's infinite intellect.

Take an illustration. Thus: God enunciates some sublime doctrine, such as that of the blessed Sacrament. We listen with respectful wonder as He unfolds, one by one, the marvels contained in that dogma. We try in vain to grapple with them, and to render them clear. But we fail to understand. We find ourselves face to face with mystery. Our intellect cannot help us. We must either reject the doctrine and exclaim, with the unbelieving Jews: "How can this man give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink?" Or we must throw ourselves wholly upon the veracity of God, and abandon ourselves unreservedly to Him, before whom the greatest intellect is immeasurably less than is the glow-worm's spark before the noon-day sun. It is not here so much a question of the submission of our will (though our will, too, has a share, and a very important share, in every act of faith) as the submission of our intellect.

In presence of any great mystery, our intellect is staggered. The doctrine is incomprehensible. We are wholly unable to reach to its heights, or to sink to its depths; it lies quite outside the field of human investigation. But, two courses lie open to us. We must either trust to our own feeble light and turn away from Him who is "the light of the world," and "walk no more with him" (John vi), or else we must humble ourselves and force our reason to blindly accept that which it can neither see nor comprehend, simply and solely on the authority of God; crying out with St. Peter: "Lord! to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."

In short, we pay homage to God with the highest of our faculties, and, in the words of St. Paul, bring our proud reason into captivity, unto the obedience of Christ.

These are three motives for exercising faith. A fourth motive is that we may thereby honor God, in a spirit of love and gratitude, who has first deigned to honor us with His confidence, in imparting to us the secrets of His own mind.

Let us develop this thought a little. Though faith is quite distinct from charity, yet there is a most intimate connection between them. Faith leads up to the higher virtue. The very wish, on the part of God, to afford us some glimpse of His own divine nature and to make known to us the hidden counsels of His own mind, is well calculated to enkindle our love, and to draw us more closely toward Him. It even helps on that unity of mind, which is one of the strongest bonds of true affection. It puts our intellects in complete harmony with God's intellect. It enables us, in a measure, to see as He sees, to judge of things as He judges, and to feed upon the selfsame truths; so that not only the *will* becomes, in a certain sense, one with God's will, but the *created intellect* becomes one with the *uncreated*. The soul becomes thus the confidant of God; is allowed to penetrate into the secrets of His mind, and to share His own knowledge. For this our blessed Redeemer gratefully returned thanks to His heavenly Father: "I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (Luke x). So, too, for a like reason, He says to His disciples: "I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard from the Father I have made known to you" (John xv).

Thus, it is clearly seen that the goodness and love of God, in thus opening out to us the treasures of His knowledge, call for a prompt and loyal faith in all He reveals, and spurs us on, by yet another strong motive, to accept, with unwavering trust, all that He proposes to our belief.

Let us, dear brethren, value this gift of Divine Faith as the greatest of treasures. Let us watch over it and guard it with the most scrupulous care, and beg Almighty God to strengthen it within us daily more and more. Let us resolve to act up to the dictates of faith; to live ever in the light and under the guidance of faith, and so to honor it by our conduct and example, that

others, seeing our good works, may be led on from mere admiration to imitation, until they come to share our privileges and to acknowledge the same authority instilled by God as His own infallible mouthpiece, namely, the one only true God-established Roman Catholic Church. Amen.

IV. DANGERS TO FAITH

BY THE VERY REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us."—2 Cor. iv, 7.

SYNOPSIS.—Faith's value, dignity, fruits; its greatness overlooked, though proclaimed in Holy Scripture. Commended by Our Lord, sought and preached by His Apostles; endangered by our earthliness: by Ignorance and by Immorality.

I. Ignorance opposed to faith: ignorance that God spoke, ignorance of what He said. Ignorance of articles of faith; indifference about religious instruction, about hidden treasures of catechism. Worse ignorance of grounds of faith, of Church's authority, of her enlightenment. Weak opposition, but delusive; non-Catholic schooling; godless journalism.

II. All admitted immorality endangers faith; sinful life, merely natural life, opposed. Resistance to Spirit of Truth, injurious; heresy, deadly. Sins against faith put it out; every sin has that tendency. Apostates most hopeless; yet pure conscience only safeguard against shipwreck; a pressing reason for spotless, humble life. St. John the Baptist. The Pharisees.

Conclusion.—Guard of faith proportioned to its worth and necessity. No folly to interfere, no bribes, no malice; rather simple heroism of practical Catholic, understanding the end; unbelieving wicked, as chaff and ashes; Church's sincere children with a lot among the saints.

My brethren—Faith is a divine virtue, divine in origin, in object, in exercise. It is a heavenly gift, of untold value, being both the condition and the foundation of Christian life. Wherever it exists there is, or was meant to be, the incomprehensibly exalted dignity of sonship and friendship with God. It may be hindered in its efficacy and effects; but if let work in our souls, it makes us pleasing to our Creator, capable of possessing and enjoying Him, fit to see Him and be like Him. Plainly it is a treasure, such a treasure that though the infinitely good God can give it as a gift, He could not create any one who would have a right to it. Being, as we call it, supernatural, it is immeasurably above the claims of all actual and possible creatures.

But our familiarity with the name of this virtue may occasion our forgetting or overlooking its greatness. Yet the things said about it in Holy Writ should always keep our estimate of it very elevated and our eager affection for it ever undiminished. Our Lord made it the first condition of His action in the world, causing His

most blessed Mother herself to be called *blessed* exactly because she *believed* (Luke i, 45). All graces He was ready to grant to those who had faith, letting His divine power do to them just according to their faith, even saying it was their faith that wrought His wonders in their bodies and souls. His praises were for those who showed faith, great faith; His regrets that He did not always meet such faith as He might have expected; His sad questioning whether when He came again He should find faith on the earth. His reproach oftenest addressed to His disciples was that their *faith was little*; His most comprehensive exhortation to them was to *have the faith of God*. And when He would finally safeguard them, and all who through them should believe, His way was to pray for their head *that his faith fail not*.

The Apostles got to understand their Master on that point sooner than on others, so that when His suggestions seemed above them, their immediate, unconditioned prayer was *Lord, increase our faith!* They carried the same view into their ministry, their exultance being that God was giving faith to all, that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, that the people were continuing in faith, that faith was purifying their hearts, that they were strengthened in faith, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts, *passim*.)

That this virtue is precious and that we have it, is enough to indicate that it is in danger; for we are poor guardians of a thing so sacredly valuable. 'Tis indeed the divine treasure in earthen vessels. To it the Apostle explicitly refers in the text quoted, as his accompanying words show. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," he writes, "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." How splendid his description of faith: the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus!

This treasure is variously imperiled by our earthly weakness. For orderly treatment we may consider its dangers under two broad heads: they are either of the nature of ignorance, or of the nature of immorality.

I. First, ignorance endangers faith. At the merest glance it may be seen that there is opposition between them, for faith is a virtue of the intellect, while ignorance is a vice of the very same faculty. On closer scrutiny it becomes still more evident that they are necessarily antipathetic. The things of faith have to be learned;

they are not acquired by nature or instinct, nor usually by inspiration alone. What we believe is what God has said; and hence we must know that He did speak; know, too, at least summarily, what are the things He really said. Ignorance in these matters may make faith impossible, or, at best, imperfect and unstable. This is the only human ignorance that can fully bear the name; for a man who understands what his Creator says to him and wants him to know, can never be justly called an ignorant man. The question is not, therefore, of our having much or little scholarship, much or little book-learning—though that, rightly handled, can give vast help in both the acquisition and the preservation of divine truth. The ignorance that really endangers belief is ignorance of the articles of faith, ignorance of their meaning and of the authority on which we receive and hold them. Certain degrees of this ignorance may be involuntary and hence blameless; but indifference about knowing Christian doctrine, unwillingness to take or seek religious instruction, can never be characteristic of a man who is and wishes to remain earnestly Catholic. Good souls take the heavenly truths that come their way, faster than the thirsty ground takes the fertilizing shower. They think there is much to learn and that they have acquired but little; and both thoughts are true. The simplest catechism in your hands, my brethren, is like a rich country in great part unexplored: like a mine of wealth very little worked. Nor must you forget that though God offers the treasure of His truth to all, He has made it a hidden treasure which requires manifold delving to be unearthed, a pearl of great price which demands deep diving to be brought to light. The more earnest the search for truth, the more is it appreciated when found; and the very common, though very superficial, idea that Christian truth is the only truth for whose acquisition no pains need be taken, is a standing danger to the solidity and permanency of Catholic faith.

More dangerous than even the partial ignorance of the articles of faith is ignorance of the grounds of faith, ignorance of the reasons for the hope that is in us. This latter ignorance is more open to attack; and, as the world runs, to lie open to attack on one's religion is to be in a sadly perilous position. Now, where faith is most traditional, its grounds are generally well held. Peasants, very little lettered, if at all, are often quick to answer, when asked why they believe some part of the Creed, that God said it; and if pressed to tell how they know

that God said it, they reply that His Church so teaches. While they hold this ground their faith is secure; they are on the rock as well of theology as of revelation. Him only, indeed, the First Truth, do we really believe; but He has said that hearing His Church we hear Him. People, however, whose social atmosphere is poisoned with error, and whose domestic atmosphere is no antidote, have to look sharply to the shiftiness of their own minds and to the impulses they inevitably receive from their unbelieving surroundings. If they lay themselves open to every wind of doctrine, they court shipwreck. Be on your guard, my brethren; you carry about with you a precious treasure, and many lie in wait to despoil you. In strictly religious matters listen only to "one having authority"—as even envious Jews recognized that Our Lord had, and as common sense shows that His Church has. Beware of the sowers of error. The worst ignorance is the falsehood that prevents the learning of truth. Such is the falsehood of all non-Catholic schooling in questions really Christian; such is the falsehood of godless journalism in all concerns of the soul. Keep clear of such influence. The Apostle says of those who have erred from the truth that "their speech spreadeth like a cancer" (II Tim. ii, 17). Of the world and of its history learn whatever true things you meet; but remember and understand that our ever old, ever new Catholicity is as well the storehouse as the preserver of all truth. God made His Church the treasury of the human family, having in it, in place and order, everything that is good for man both to know and to desire. If petty minds, pitifully ill-tutored, come piping that they have just discovered a means of shaking the house upon the rock, be rather amused than disturbed. The winds and the rains have long been beating on that house, and still it stands. The wagging of idle tongues will hardly shiver its massiveness. As it is itself the very "pillar and ground of truth" (I Tim. iii, 15) against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Matt. xvi, 18), those, who, in wise confidence, hold their ground within its sacred walls, are sure of never being overthrown.

But as the enemy is crafty, we must be provident and have ready an armory of facts for his confusion: we may need them when obscurity of mind happens to ourselves, or when we can hold out a hand to those who grope—for every man has charge of his brother. Grasp well, then, my brethren, that all truth is of God, as is all reality, and that no one truth ever contradicts another. If a man

should pretend to you that his science won't agree with your religion, be sure that he is mistaken either about the science or the religion, probably about both. Be not slow to recall that our great teachers, even our saints, have often been great scientists, too; that, in fact, the boasted sciences of the present day owe immensely more to men of fervently Catholic life than to men of any other single description. Those were the truly scientific, the truly wise, men who so cleverly gripped our little ball of clay as not to loose their hold on the heaven of God. To the flimsy pretences of shallow book or paper you need give little time or attention. Impious stupidities are best unheeded. If a passing observation to your religion seems to require an answer, be ready to give it or to get it, knowing always that the apparent difficulty has already been solved some thousands of times. "Nothing new under the sun," is specially true of error; nothing new in it but the form, which is never more than a new distortion of facts. The Lord's Word does not pass away, nor does the Creed of His saints. Hence to think, even vaguely and distantly, that anything can ever be solidly advanced against a point of your Catholic belief, would be to show lamentable ignorance and to indicate the imperative need of further instruction for the safeguarding of your divine faith.

II. The second great danger to faith may be called immorality. It is a widespread danger, as widespread as human nature. Be not surprised, my brethren, at the term or at its application. Whatever is sinful is immoral, inasmuch as it contravenes the laws of conduct; and whatever makes for sin, or even for the lower natural life, is necessarily inimical to so holy and perfect a virtue as divine faith. Arguments need not be multiplied; hear the Old Testament and the New: "The wicked man is void of knowledge" (Prov. xxix, 7); "for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins" (Wis. i, 4); "every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved" (John iii, 20); "how can you believe, who receive glory one from another; and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?" (Ib. v, 44); "you do not believe because you are not of my sheep" (Ib. x, 26). So, no light, no knowledge, no wisdom for the sinful; no believing for the evil, the proud, the disobedient, who hear not the Shepherd's voice, nor come when He calls. It is not that every sin, be it even mortal, immediately destroys faith: holy Church found it necessary to define the con-

trary; only sin against faith at once destroys faith. But all sin obscures, weakens and endangers it. The word of God says that we can neither commence nor continue to believe without divine help. And if we turn that help aside? If we reject it? The Holy Ghost alone can form in us acts of this supernatural virtue. But if we sacrilegiously expel Him? if we close our souls against His breathings, if we heartlessly shut our ears to His unspeakable pleadings? In a small yacht, as you are all aware, you may cross a wide lake or ascend a strong river—provided you have sound wind-filled sails. But you will not go far if you keep out of the way of the wind, if your sails are torn and worthless, if you refuse to carry or hoist any sails at all. So do many Catholics in the progress of Christian life.

This point, my brethren, needs much attention from some of you. The earthen vessel in which we have so divine a treasure as faith, is, you must admit, perilous enough in its unstable fragility, without being sordidly neglected, without being corroded and buffeted by filth and iniquity. Now, you easily grant that you fail in other matters, but not, you think, in faith. You do not see that contradicting your religion in practise is endangering your belief of it. I know, my brethren, and am glad to proclaim that poor sinners can fall very low and yet never doubt about Catholicity. In that, too, is their one hope of salvation; for faith keeps open their access to the Church, and access to her is access to God's mercy. They begin to look hopeless only when, by word or act, they cast themselves into the morass of soul-destroying heresy. 'Tis of apostates St. Paul uses the fearful words about the impossibility of being renewed again to penance. But notice that on this very question of preserving or losing faith, the same Apostle has a word of warning for those who fail not in belief but in conscience. When he writes: "Having faith and a good conscience, which some rejecting have made shipwreck concerning the faith" (I Tim. i, 19), he sufficiently shows that where conscience was otherwise violated the way was taken toward loss of belief. He continues to enforce that teaching by speaking of the mystery of faith that is to be held "in a pure conscience" (Ib. iii, 9). The words seem like an echo of his abiding anxiety about the heavenly treasure which he had been instrumental in placing in so many earthen vessels.

But earthly as we are, we yet can have this good conscience, this

pure conscience: not, however, with sin. All sin is iniquity and foulness; hence with it, of any kind, conscience is bad and unclean, and faith feels not at home. Two vices are so speedily destructive of the delicate virtue that we require special caution against them. Impurity and pride are necessary and deadly enemies of this sacred dignity of our elevated nature. It has been figuratively yet accurately said that as was St. John the Baptist in the court of Herod, so is faith in the unchaste soul: beheading is the consequence. For the proud we have the Lord's intimation that they could not believe in Him so long as they sought false glory. Witness the Pharisees, who knew so much of the law and professed belief so formally, yet persisted in rejecting the true Messiah even when testified to by Himself, by His Father, and by the Holy Spirit!

To what, then, my brethren, do our reflections lead us? Surely to the conclusion that, as faith is most high and precious, so must our jealous care of it be most humbly assiduous. We should not lose it, we would not lessen it: we need it all for our eternal salvation, for our filial service of our heavenly Father. Without it we cannot please God, without it we can be but condemned. For no earthly bribe will we betray it, for no fleshpots renounce it, for no mess of pottage barter it, for no passing enjoyments endanger it. Far from us be the folly of the worldlings who have finally to say: "We have erred from the way of truth; and the light of justice hath not shined unto us; and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us" (Wis. v, 6); farther still be the counsel of the malicious who said to God: "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job xxi, 14). We, my brethren, believe in the Almighty, we serve Him and find profit in praying to Him. We know that of His wrath the unbelieving wicked shall drink; that their lamp shall be put out; that a deluge shall come upon them; that they shall be as chaff before the face of the wind, and as ashes which the whirlwind scattereth. Fearing our human weakness, but trusting in the grace of faith which, as we so often sing, alone suffices to strengthen the sincere heart—*ad firmandum cor sincerum sola fides sufficit*—we simply hold our ground in the ranks of the Church's children who have their eyes opened, who are converted from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, who receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints by the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Ib. et Act. xxvi.)

V. ON THE REVERENCE DUE TO GOD

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"Let all the inhabitants of the world be in awe of him."—Ps. xxxii, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—Preamble: Self-abasement of the publican and bold familiarity of the Pharisee, the reason why the one went down justified rather than the other. First point: Reverence. Its basic element is fear before the power of God; but fear allayed by love. The law-abiding citizen and the law-breaker. The child and the slave. God is the Lord and Father. Second point: Irreverence. The anti-religious. The unreligious. The thoughtless.

Conclusion.

Of the two men who went up into the temple to pray the one came down justified rather than the other; and we know the reason. The bearing of the Pharisee was proud and haughty, his prayer was bold and familiar; while the poor publican bowed down before the face of God and poured out his soul in accents of humility and reverence. In both instances the disposition backed the attitude; behind the prayer was the spirit. The trees being different, different were the fruits they bore. Each spoke according to the idea he entertained of the grandeur and majesty and justice and goodness of the God in whose invisible presence he stood.

Conceit and self-righteousness blinded the Pharisee. Unsobered by fear, he saunters into the awful presence of the Almighty. There is no thought in his mind of his own nothingness, of the holiness and power of the Most High, of the infinite abyss that yawns between himself as a creature and the Creator whom he addresses. Hence his bold freedom and that familiarity which is incompatible with reverence and borders so dangerously on contempt. We learn to condemn what we do not fear; we can not love God aright without fearing Him. The measure of God's love for us is the measure of the distance that separates His greatness from our lowliness, His power from our weakness, His sanctity from our sinfulness, His height from our depth. These are the two terms; His love hath bridged them over. And how can we realize, even in a measure, what that divine love is, unless we succeed in some

manner in sounding the depths over which the mercy of God has come to us, unless we try to conceive from what heights He has descended to our misery. In this the Pharisee failed.

The publican, on the other hand, who stood afar off and dared not raise his eyes against the majesty of heaven and struck his breast, expressed the reverence and godly fear that possessed his soul, when he cried out: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" He was not unmindful who it was that he addressed, in whose presence he stood, and who he himself was that presumed to speak to God. The thought overwhelmed him; he humbled himself accordingly. Wherefore did he go down justified rather than the other. He alone was wise of the two, of that wisdom of which the fear of God is the beginning. He stood in awe of his Maker, and his prayer was heard.

We need to be taught many things in our duty to God. Yet, who that believes aright requires to be told that the God whom our faith reveals should be held in reverence and holy awe? Who that knows God but takes naturally the salutary advice of the Psalmist and says within himself, when the idea of God is present to his mind: "Come, let us adore and fall down before the Lord that made us!" for "who shall not fear thee, O King of nations!"

Reverence is not merely fear of God, but it is based on fear. Men fear nature in her angry moods; and nature is the hand-maid of the Creator. Why, then, should not men fear God! Let the elements unchain their fury and rush unchecked in a mad career of havoc and destruction and the stoutest heart quails in dismay and awe! Who has looked unmoved on the all-conquering power of the storm or the earthquake and the other upheavals of nature; and has not reflected how insignificant is man and powerless in the face of these faint, vague shadows of the powers of the Almighty? The flood rushes in on Galveston and engulfs her people; and a whole nation is stricken with terror. Mount Pelee belches forth and smothers her cities, and lives are sniffed out by thousands. San Francisco rocks, her buildings tumble; amid the crash of ruin and the roar of flames a whole city is made desolate; and the whole world hold up its hands in horror and dismay. And it is but the finger of God that has moved! So true is it that greatness and power humbles, subdues and awes us, driving home to us our own powerlessness and insignificance. No man needs to be told to fear when in the presence of an agency that can over-

whelm him. Of God we should ever say with holy Job: "I have always feared God as waves swelling over me, and his weight I was unable to bear." Like a shell at the mercy of the giant ocean, the sport of the swelling waves, unable, if the seas break over it, to shake off the mighty burden or to bear so great a weight: so, if faith is right, is man, the feeble creature, in the presence of the Maker—a thing of nothing at the mercy of the swelling ocean of God's almighty power.

And why should he not fear, since the very angels through reverence cover in His presence their faces with their wings, when "the pillars of heaven tremble at his beck!" And of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, it was written: "He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." For Christ in His sacred humanity acknowledged the sovereignty and majesty of the Father, bowed to it as supreme and absolute, and abased Himself before it in a feeling of reverence due to the Almighty.

But let us not mistake the nature of this godly fear, which we call reverence. All who live under the law stand in awe of its majesty and fear those in whose keeping is its authority. Thus did Mephisbosheth do reverence to David and acknowledge him for his sovereign. Now there are two classes of citizens who fear the law and the custodians thereof: the law-abiding citizen and the law-breaker. They both fear, yet how different is the quality of their fear! You know how and why the good citizen fears the law. He has assisted in its making, is interested in its maintenance, desires its triumph, and would rush to arms and die, if need be, to uphold and defend it. He respects the law, loves it. What he fears about it is that he might, in some moment of supreme folly, forget himself, go counter to its mandates and, falling into its clutches, have to pay the just penalty of his crime. He loves the law because it is good; he respects it because it is just; he fears it because it is strong and he himself is weak. The severity of legal chastisements awes him, but does not cow him, for this very severity is his own protection and security, whose edge he shall not feel unless he comes to deserve it. And he is determined, as far as he is able, not to make himself amenable to the bar of justice.

But the criminal, deliberate in his rebellion against the law, neither respects nor loves it. He simply fears with a servile fear, a slavish dread and terror. He hates it. What though it be good and therefore strong, fair and therefore severe! It punishes the

wicked; he chooses to be evil; he is against it and it is against him. What he fears is less the law than the avenging might of the law, which is only another proof of his perverse malice and the consequence of his crimes.

There is a wide, essential difference between the state of mind of these two kinds of citizens. In the one there is fear pure and simple; in the other, fear mingled with love; and this is reverence—"fear allayed by love and love sobered by fear." This is the attitude that belongs to the God-fearing man toward his Creator; thus did the publican pray.

Reverence for God calls in us for that which a child feels toward a parent, as distinguished from the abject state of mind of a slave toward his master. What child remains indifferent to and unmoved by parental dignity and that natural superiority whence proceed wise instruction, salutary correction and loving protection! And we are the children of God. As says St. Paul: "We have had our fathers in the flesh for instructors, and we reverence them; shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live?" Just as the law-breaker fears the just wrath of the law, so does the slave live in dread of the blind cruelty of his master, his barbarous whims and moods, his unreasoning spirit of vengeance. The rod is over him. He knows not when it shall fall, or why. Deserving or undeserving, it is liable to come down on his defenseless shoulders at any moment. Neither by faithful service nor by loyalty nor devotion can he expect to ward off the blows and enjoy security. How otherwise does the child fear! He, too, knows that the hand which blesses may also strike. But he knows what spirit moves the parent. Does he dread punishment? Rather he dreads to deserve punishment. And when he does deserve it, it is with shame and blushing and contrition that he accepts the just penalty. It is a chastening; he receives it with a submissive spirit and does not turn away the bowels of his affection and love from him who strikes. Being by nature in a state of inferiority to the author of his days, could a child really love a parent if he ceased to fear him? And this is reverence. Could he have a correct idea of the goodness of a father without a realization of that father's power and dignity? What appreciation could he have for parental forbearance if he failed to recognize parental authority? Take away that holy fear, and esteem will be lost, then respect, then love; contempt follows, bred of familiarity, where deference is due.

So it is in religion. He, of whom we are bidden to stand in awe, is truly a Father, the Father of our souls, and we are His children; He is the being from whom all authority proceeds, and we are citizens of His Holy City; He holds the universe in the hollow of His hand, and before the manifestations of His power we are but worms of the earth who should contemplate His invisible presence with a lowly and self-abasing temper, a deep reverence and a holy fear, even as the publican. Fear Him? Yes, as a son fears his father, as a good citizen fears the law. We are subject to Him, but not as slaves to a cruel master; we are sinners who deserve His wrath, but our knowledge of Him through faith bids us hope and trust in His great mercy.

The God whom we are to reverence is He of whom spoke truly the Psalmist: "He spoke and they (all things) were made; he commanded and they were created. The Lord bringeth to naught the counsels of nations; and he rejecteth the devices of peoples and casteth away the counsels of princes. The Lord hath looked down from heaven: he hath beheld all the sons of men. The king is not saved by a great army: nor shall the giant be saved by his own strength. Vain is the horse for safety: neither shall he be saved by the abundance of his strength. Behold the eyes of the Lord are on them that fear him: and on them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their souls from death; and feed them in famine." Verily, then, should "all the inhabitants of the world be in awe of him." The advice of the Psalmist is good: "Come, let us adore and fall down before the Lord that made us."

He who knows who and what God is, and has taken the correct measure of himself, can not but reverence Him, abase himself in the divine presence and work out his salvation in a holy fear. Such a one will be led naturally to perform all the required acts of external religion: worship, adoration, prayer, etc. Thus is "the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom," of that wisdom whereby we serve God as He has a right to be served. And where there is no faith we may well expect to find irreverence betray itself in insane mouthings concerning the Divinity by those who believe not or pretend not to believe; for it was the Holy Ghost that spoke of the "fool" that saith in his heart: "There is no God."

Happily, gross irreverence toward the Deity is rare enough in our society. It is not fashionable to revile God, however much men may fail to pay Him all the respect due to Him. Even those whose

minds and souls are lost to the idea of God and who revel inwardly in all manner of impiety, refrain from expressing their blasphemous thoughts, if not through reverence for God, at least through respect for the feelings of those who believe. Yet irreverence will sometimes go as far as the hatred of God, or of the idea of God, and then the godless will betray themselves. One has to go back to the orgy of the French Revolution to meet such examples of anti-religiousness as has been betrayed these latter days in that unhappy country. God-fearing men will long remember with a shudder the expression of such diabolical sentiments as these: "If God should appear before the multitude in palpable form, the first duty of men would be to refuse Him obedience and to consider Him, not as a master to whom men should submit, but as an equal with whom men may argue" (Jaures, political leader and deputy); "It is necessary to take sides between the rights of God and the rights of man" (Clemenceau, Premier); "The separation of Church and state is the sole means of consummating the ruin of the Divinity" (Brisson, president of the Chamber of Deputies); "We have put out the lights in the heavens" (Viviani, member of the ministry). And as an endorsement of this last statement and the sentiment it expressed, the words were officially placarded on the walls of all the cities of France. Never perhaps since the beginning of time has such irreverence been offered to God in the name of a state, civilized or uncivilized.

But all irreverence does not require loss of faith. Even those who believe in God at times forget themselves and forget Him whom all men should fear. The Pharisee standing in the temple forgot in whose presence he stood, forgot the majesty of the God whom he addressed. I do not speak of blasphemy, which is the irreverent use of the name of God, and has a malice all its own, but rather of that temper of soul which is capable of ignoring God for any length of time, of putting Him out of mind as though He were a being afar off and unmindful of the so-called trifles of life, and of cold-bloodedly fashioning one's life as though it were no concern of God what one did or did not. There is fear of God in such a soul; but it is the fear of the slave when the master is absent, the fear of the professional criminal who is able for a time to evade the law. There is fear; let but danger threaten, let but the finger of God show itself visibly and the base cowardice of that soul will reveal itself. It is fear, but without love and without hope. Such men

often have a large meed of mock pity for the honest believer who preserves in his soul a holy awe, a godly fear of the Lord who made him. They approach familiarly the most sacred truths and mysteries and weigh them gravely to see if they fit in with their own ideas. They talk boldly of the independence and rights of man. They belittle religion, scorn its precepts as far as observance goes, think lightly of its devotional exercises and make merry at the expense of the pious and devout. They firmly believe in themselves; the thought of God is stored away somewhere in the background recesses of the mind and is not suffered to appear and interfere. Such souls are in a habitual state of irreverence, and they are not too uncommon. We sometimes say they have no faith, but they have. What is lacking is a holy fear, a fear coupled with love, reverence for God, which their weak faith has not yet been able to produce. They know God, but do not know Him aright. Hence consciences that are dead to an intimate sense of God; hence esteem for Him that is only skin-deep, and lack of veneration and honor for Him in thoughts and feelings.

If we practise our religion and pray and honor God by acts of external worship—which are manifestations of reverence—it is not unusual for us, because we are weak and forgetful by nature, to fall short of the respect which is due and would be present, if we only remembered. Where there is no remembrance there is no reverence. How often, while bodily in the presence of the God of the Eucharist, are we unmindful of that presence? And is not the familiarity that will permit such thoughtlessness and make a sustained effort of attention impossible, a lack of holy fear? Is the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for us an awesome spectacle, full of solemn and sublime import? When we speak to God in prayer do we not honor Him with our lips only, while our hearts are far from Him? And what reverence for the Lord is that which does not extend to His name, His day, His temples, His priests, His Sacraments and all the things which pertain to His worship?

“Come not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses was filled with awe and hid his face, for he durst not look upon God. Pharaoh feared the Lord of the Israelites while the plagues lasted, and when his magicians, after trying to perform wonders like unto those of Moses, confessed: “This is the finger of God.”

But no sooner was the plague removed than the king again hardened his heart and refused to keep his promise. And the Red Sea swallowed him up, him and his hosts. The Philistines stood in awe and terror of the true God when they beheld their own god, Dagon, broken and mutilated on the ground before the Ark of His Covenant; but they, too, soon forgot their fear. Oza was not a priest, yet he dared stretch out his hand and touch the Ark. The indignation of the Lord was enkindled against him for this act, and for his rashness he was struck dead upon the spot.

The God whom we serve and who is so near to us is the "holy, holy, holy One" before whom the angels tremble. To Him is due the homage of our minds and hearts in justice to His infinite perfections. Let us approach Him with reverence and walk ever mindful of the divine presence that fills the earth and with all the inhabitants of the earth let us stand in awe of Him.

VI. EXTERIOR WORSHIP, CEREMONIES

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

"God is a spirit; and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth."—John iv, 24.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.* The story of Our Lord and the Samaritan woman points out the true nature of external worship. It exists not for its own sake but for the sake of the interior worship which it fosters and signifies.

I. True worship neither merely external nor merely internal. Nature of religion. A bond between man and God. Man a being composed of body and soul. A fitting religion must regard both elements. Necessary for human friendships, therefore, a fortiori, necessary for divine friendships. An exigency in corresponding with the action of the Indwelling Spirit.

II. External worship an exigency of the scholastic axiom: "Nothing in the intellect except what has come through the senses." Also an exigency of man's social nature.

III. Necessary from the nature of (a) the Incarnation, (b) the Church, (c) the Sacraments and the sacramentals.

Objections answered.—God sees the heart, and therefore needs not to have its workings made manifest.

Conclusion.—The right use of external religion. Avoid (a) neglect of externals, (b) superstitious use of externals, (c) sacrilegious use of externals. Story of Naaman the Syrian.

Let us picture to ourselves the scene of Our Lord and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Jesus is tired with His journey and is sitting by the well resting. The woman comes to draw water and is asked by Our Lord: "Give me to drink." From the circumstance of the water from the well He teaches her of the living water of grace, the fountain springing up into everlasting life. He reads her heart and tells her of her past life. Recognizing in Him some divine power, she refers to Him the question between the Jews and the Samaritans as to which form of worship is most pleasing to God, the sacrifices on her native mountain or the sacrifices in the Temple. He answers that the hour cometh when they shall adore the Father neither in the Temple nor on the mountain. The hour cometh when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The old dispute between Jerusalem and Gerizim is now over and has no further meaning. The Mosaic dispensation is blending away into that of Christ. The Christian

revelation having come with its world-wide mission, with its rites and ceremonies suitable for all peoples, public worship is no longer localized either in Jerusalem or Gerizim. The time has come for the fulfilment of the ancient prophesy: "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation."

Manifestly the worship of the true God, who is a spirit, does not imply the doing away with all external rite and ceremony. Nay, it demands it. The Jewish worship in fading away into the Christian worship assumed a more perfect, because a more spiritual form. The Jewish worship was true and real so far as it went, but the Christian worship was more true because more real. External rites and ceremonies were still to be used, but behind and through those rites and ceremonies there was a more real, a more true and a more perfect world of spirit. The clearer revelation and the richer flow of grace sharpened the religious sense of humanity and produced in it a deeper reverence. By what means, then, was that religious sense and reverence able to find for itself a fit expression? Nothing can be imagined more fitting, more effectual, more real and more spiritual than the great act of Christian worship which superseded all other forms, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the external rite in which and by which the Son of God offers himself by the hands of a human priest as a sacrifice of priceless worth to the Eternal Father. This was the worship which Our Lord had in His mind when He said: "God is a spirit; and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth."

The true worship of God, therefore, consists in steering clear of two predominant fallacies, fallacies which have played a role in the whole history of religion and which have never been more rampant than they are at the present day. The one is that which would do away with all rite and ceremony and worship God in what it is pleased to call "the religion of the spirit." It is more theoretical than it is practical, professed more in books and erudite journals than in real life. The other is more practical than theoretical. It consists in practising a kind of religion which is all form and ceremony with little or no inward faith and spiritual life. No! If God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth, both the outward and the inward elements of man's life must enter into his religion. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." The

spirit quickeneth the flesh and therefore needs the flesh in order to manifest its activity. The flesh is nothing without the spirit, but neither is the spirit anything without the flesh. Thus, therefore, the Psalmist sings his deepest spiritual experience: "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." I feel the religious instinct within me. My heart is restless. It seeks for God. And in its lifelong endeavor to get nearer and nearer to God it must express its yearnings through the flesh. The life of religion must be a spiritual life, but that life of the spirit depends for its perfection on the aid given to it by the life of the body. The raising up of the heart and mind to God can only reach its greatest possible perfection by the aid of external rite and symbol.

What is religion? Religion in its ultimate analysis is the tie which binds man to God. Sometimes it is viewed as a recognition of God's supreme authority over man, sometimes as a moral life between man and man, sometimes as a life of prayer; but always the root idea which underlies every religious form is the idea of a bond between God and man.

Since, however, man is a composite being, made up of a visible body and an invisible soul, and since God contains all the perfections of man in some incomprehensible way, the bond which is to unite man to God must be one suitable to man's nature. It must bind him both body and soul to God. It must draw his senses as well as his mind. Nay, it must use his senses in order to get at his heart and mind. The external forms of religion, therefore, are not adopted because God wants them or needs them, but rather because man needs them in order to enable him to devote his whole self to God. Hence the cult of external objects of devotion is primarily a help to us, and through us they are dedicated to God. We are said to cultivate those objects to which we pay attention by our works. We cultivate a garden by digging, watering, weeding and sowing it. We cultivate a friendship by acts of kindness and deference and a thousand little attentions. We cultivate a taste for literature by studying the best books and practising ourselves in writing. So also we cultivate the things of God by busying ourselves in an external service of Him. We give expression to inward worship by a series of external actions, not because such actions are of service to Him, but because they are of service to ourselves as enabling us to come nearer to God.

The necessity of thus manifesting our internal religion by an

external religion may be felt by comparing our love of God with our love for our neighbor. If it is true that a friend would think little of a love which was all nice words and no deeds, or which was a show of deeds and words with no interior affection, it is equally true that he would not be satisfied with a love which was all interior affection without any good words and noble deeds. Indeed, he would be quite justified in doubting whether the interior affection at all existed. Even when we have been openly assured of a friend's affection and esteem, we like him to renew the expression of it from time to time by a letter, by a visit or by some small present. If, therefore, these external acts help so much in maintaining our love of our neighbor whom we see, how much more will they help us in maintaining our love of God, whom we do not see?

Again the same necessity may be felt by recognizing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the whole of man. Our bodies are called the temples of the Holy Spirit, while our souls are called the spouses of the Holy Spirit. God by the constant action of His will is always holding the two together. He makes the two parts into one man. God is present in the soul also by His grace. When, therefore, the soul corresponds with grace, the body shares in its service and glory. And we recognize this share of the body in the life of religion by the various acts of external religion, genuflecting, kneeling, standing, making the sign of the Cross and the like. So also when the soul resists the grace which is offered to it, the body shares in the disobedience. When, therefore, the soul returns to God, the body must return with it. Sorrow for sin, although of its very essence it is a spiritual act, yet in order that it may be as perfect as possible it should be accompanied with outward manifestations. When we are sorry for having offended a friend we express our sorrow by an apology. When we are sorry for having offended God we express our sorrow by striking our breast, by reciting some penitential prayer, or by the external manifestation of our sorrow in the Sacrament of Penance. Whether it is in the strengthening of existing bonds or the renewing of broken bonds, the life of religion demands external acts as the due complement of internal acts.

There is an elementary thesis of the philosophy of the human mind which shows how all this is in accordance with sound reason. Nothing is in the mind of man that has not hitherto been received through the senses. The eyes are called the windows of

the soul. The natural revelation of God has its foundation in the world which man sees around him. The supernatural revelation of God to man must be received by hearing, by listening to the accredited ministers of God's Church. Men, moreover, are not isolated beings living each on a little island by himself. He is a social being. His religion is a social religion. He can no more live the life of religion alone than he can live the family life, or the municipal life, or the political life alone. He must join with his fellow-men in the life of religion. And in order to do this he must have some common form of external religious expression. Religion is a personal matter, but not merely a personal matter. It is a social matter as well. I am sent into the world not merely to save my own soul, but also to help to save the soul of my neighbor. Therefore it is that in every race and age we find men banding themselves together for the worship of God in a corporate body, and recognizing each other as co-worshippers by an external common ritual. And the dignity of the common ritual varies according to the degree of inward spirituality which the various races have reached, from the pagan who conceives of God as an angry Being to be placated with the smell of blood, to the Catholic whose spirituality finds its most perfect expression in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is in this composition of body and soul, of flesh and spirit, of external religion and internal religion that we find a special fitness in the Incarnation. God knowing what was in man and being well aware of what he was made, sent His Son into the world to save sinners in a way best suited to their nature. The invisible and undivided Trinity clothed One of their number in human flesh precisely that man might see God in the flesh, in order that man might co-operate with God in the work of redeeming the world, in order that all flesh might actually *see* the salvation of God.

Following the same wise economy, God while on earth arranged the whole system of salvation on this double principle of the visible and the invisible. In His own life of redeeming mankind the real work was accomplished by His unseen obedient will, but it was expressed in His external sufferings at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and at Calvary. The Eternal Father did not take pleasure in Christ's sufferings for their own sake, but rather in the will-force put forth in bearing the sufferings. The slightest wish of Christ had been enough to redeem mankind, had not the Eternal God chosen to redeem mankind through the instrumentality of a passion

and death which all men could see. God would win men's hearts in human fashion, not force them. So it was that Our Lord, when He was ministering to the people, made use of external symbols in order the better to make His own spirit felt in the human spirit. Thus it is written that the leper came to Him and knelt down, saying: "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean." And Jesus, having compassion on him, stretched forth His hand and touching him said to him: "I will. Be thou made clean." Again, Our Lord, in the agony in the garden, gave the divine example of kneeling during prayer. Withdrawing away from His disciples a stone's cast, He knelt down and prayed: "Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: But yet not my will but thine be done." Once more, when He cured the man born blind, He might have accomplished His object by merely taking thought. but no. He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay on the man's eyes. Then on the part of the man He enacted a certain amount of ritual, too: "Go wash in the pool of Siloe. And the man went and washed, and he came seeing."

So, too, when Christ established His Church He made it suitable to the double element in man. Even the Church itself should have a body and a soul. The soul should be that collection of souls of men united to God in love. The body should be that collection of men acknowledging the supremacy of the Vicar of Christ. Those belonging to the soul of the Church were not necessarily to be those belonging to the body, but it was through the body that, ordinarily speaking, the highest degree of soul union was to be obtained, for the body of the Church was the richest visible expression of its soul. The sacramental system through which divine grace ordinarily was to flow, was characterized by its aptitude for the double capacity of man. The internal grace which was to sanctify man's invisible soul, was to be conveyed by external rites performed on man's body as on a subject. The invisible grace that was to destroy the invisible original sin was to be infused through the instrumentality of an external washing with water and an external pronouncement of the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Then on the part of man, his highest act of worship, his most intimate and fruitful act of spirit communion with God was to be accomplished by a Holy Sacrifice offered under the visible veils of bread and wine.

The beauty of this arrangement is manifest when we compare

an act of sin with an act of love. Man's spirit life consists of a series of acts which are either sinful or virtuous. An indifferent free act is just theoretically possible, but probably never takes place in fact. An act of sin is a turning away of the human will from the divine will. An act of love is a conforming of the human will to the divine will. But both the sinful and the virtuous acts of the will show themselves in action, either in external action or in internal action, for even our most secret thoughts are accompanied by some sensible phantasm in the brain. If, therefore, the will must be effectually turned away from sin toward God, it must summon to its aid those sensible faculties in conjunction with which it acts. They have been instrumental in alluring it away from God and so they must be made instrumental in alluring it back to God. The will is a delicately poised faculty. Its freedom consists in being able to turn either one way or the other. But the senses and the external world are so liable to draw it toward sin that they must be counteracted by external allurements in the opposite direction. Therefore, God ordains a number of external rites and ceremonies all calculated to give to man a stable equilibrium in the way of grace. God ordains fasting not because He wants the offering of a bit of bread, but because He wants that strong act of love which is fostered by abstinence from bread. The external acts exist only for the sake of the internal acts. But simply because man is made of body and spirit his internal spiritual life can only be maintained by a corresponding life of external religion.

Herein lies the answer to a whole host of objections which are urged against the Catholic Church. The Catholic religion, it is said, is a sensuous religion. We are bidden to rend our hearts and not our garments. God is the *scrutator cordium*, He reads the heart and therefore needs not to receive any visible or audible manifestation of its working. The answer is that all these external acts are done not because God has need of them, but because man has need of them. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; not in spirit only, for that were not a truthful worship, but with his "whole man," with all his heart and with all his mind and with all his soul and with all his strength. And in no way can such strength of worship be assured as by putting one's internal desires into external action. This objection against external worship, if it had any force whatever, would hold good also against internal worship. For God has

no need even of that. He is quite content and satisfied with the mutual love of His own Blessed Trinity. If He loves man it is merely out of condescension; and if man is allowed to love and worship God it is just for man's own good. External religion, therefore, has been ordained not to satisfy God's longing directly, but to enable man to put himself more effectually into harmony with God's will and so cultivate his own highest interests. The human mind is joined to God by spiritual acts certainly, but those acts are inflamed by the corporal acts and external rites of which the sacramental part of religion consists. "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" No. At best these are only the signs of the interior life and of spiritual works which God accepts for their own sakes. "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

The same answer which justifies the externals of the Catholic religion in the face of non-Catholics, also serves to help Catholics to make a proper use of the externals of their religion. We can not deny that there is a tendency in all of us to forget the spiritual significations which lie behind the corporal manifestations thereof. This tendency arises from use and familiarity and from want of reflection. It is no reason whatever, however, for attempting to cut down our external religious practises. Such a course of action would only cut us off more hopelessly from the spiritual world. But it is a reason for examination of conscience as to whether we are making a right use of all the external means of arriving at internal graces. It is a reason for asking ourselves whether we stop short at the letter, the letter which killeth, or whether we go on through the letter to the spirit, the spirit which giveth life. Do we go to church or to Communion out of mere routine? If so, the remedy is not to stay away from church or to abstain from Communion, but rather to excite in ourselves more worthy dispositions by recollection that these things have been provided to make access to the spiritual world all the more easy for us. Do we take holy water because it is customary to do so or rather in order to remind us of purity of heart? Do we put on our scapulars merely because we have promised to do so, or because some one has asked us, or because we think there is some inherent spiritual magic in them? The real spiritual reason why we should put them on is because they are the uniform which reminds us that we are the servants of

Our Blessed Lady and that wearing that uniform we ought to do nothing unworthy of it.

Thus we might go through all the Sacraments and sacramentals of the Church and ask ourselves whether we are paying sufficient attention to the spiritual life which they are intended to foster and to signify. First, are we at all neglecting the outward ordinances of religion and thus cutting ourselves off from the spiritual life of the Church? Secondly, are we making a superstitious use of the outward ordinances of religion by expecting them to produce good results without our active, intelligent and deliberate co-operation? Thirdly, are we making something of a sacrilegious use of them by carelessly going through the various forms without any attention to their spiritual meaning? "These people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify me, but their heart is far from me."

Let the story of Naaman the Syrian sum up for us the value of external rite and ceremony. He went to Eliseus to be cured of leprosy. The prophet of God declined to see him, but sent a messenger bidding him go and wash in Jordan seven times. And Naaman was angry and went away saying: "I thought he would have come out to me, and standing would have invoked the name of the Lord his God, and touched with his hand the place of the leprosy and healed me." But, being better advised, he at length went down to the Jordan, and he washed seven times according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored as the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean.

VII. THE VENERATION OF SAINTS

BY THE VERY REV. ALEXANDER MAC DONALD, D.D.

"I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me."

SYNOPSIS.—I. (a) God alone to be adored, i. e., honored with sovereign worship. The essence of idolatry lies in giving to a creature the worship due to God alone. (b) Worship a species of honor. Its motive cause moral excellence. Worship of a creature wholly devoid of moral excellence grossest kind of idolatry. The worship of idols devil-worship in disguise. Monstrous character of; punishment of. (c) Love the soul of true worship. Where love is wanting, worship merely formal. Undue love of creatures a worship of idols. No one can serve two masters—Mammon and Christ.

II. (a) Veneration of saints. Honor to whom honor is due. Their titles to veneration. No taint of superstition in honor shown them. Scripture instances. (b) Invocation of saints. Good and profitable—not necessary. Law of analogy: poor in this world's goods beg from rich. (c) One the queen of saints and angels. Claims all but adoring love. Called blessed by all generations. Example of Esther and As-suerus. "We fly to thy patronage."

III. (a) Veneration of relics and images. Moral worth of, not intrinsic, but extrinsic and purely relative. Worship of also purely relative. (b) Relics and images not venerated for their own sake. Images and symbols representative. Saluting the flag. Adoration of Cross on Good Friday same in principle. A passage in point from Newman. (c) Veneration of relics and images conformable to reason and custom. Thoroughly human sentiment lies at root of.

Conclusion.—The crucifix and images of Jesus and Mary in Catholic homes.

I. Man, the creature of God, made in God's image, having God for his last end, is bound to worship God by the very law of his being, a law the yoke of which he can no more shake off than he can divest himself of the nature that makes him a man. This is man's first and highest duty; this is God's first commandment. This commandment, so far forth as it is prohibitory, forbids our giving to any created being the supreme homage which is due to God alone. "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me." The essence of idolatry lies in giving to a creature the worship due to the Creator. To understand this we must first consider what worship is.

Worship is a species of honor. It is that religious honor which is paid to a superior being. Its motive cause is virtue or moral

excellence. Intellectual gifts may challenge our admiration; virtue alone commands respect; virtue alone claims as peculiarly its own the tribute of honor. The measure of the virtue or moral excellence, that is in a being, is the measure of the honor to which it is entitled. Hence it follows that, as in God there is moral excellence without measure, seeing that He sums up in His being all perfection, there is due to God supreme religious honor or worship. To render to any creature this supreme religious honor is idolatry; for no matter how great the moral excellence of a creature may be, it comes infinitely short of the moral excellence of the Creator. But if a creature be wholly devoid of moral excellence, to give it supreme religious honor is the crassest kind of idolatry. This is idolatry in the strictest sense, the worship of idols, the worship of things that are devoid not only of virtue or moral excellence, but of intelligence and of sense. It would seem, however, that man, no matter how low he may have fallen, no matter how degraded, never worships a senseless and lifeless thing, such as an idol, for its own sake. Even the most degraded fetich worshiper of darkest Africa does not mean to pay religious honor to a stock or stone as such—to an image that has eyes and sees not, ears and hears not. He believes, as missionaries relate, that there is a virtue and an intelligence in the image or in some way connected with it, a spirit in short, which is pleased and flattered by the worship offered, and is kept from working mischief to the worshiper. The worship of idols is in reality devil-worship in disguise. And as the devil, or fallen angel, is wholly bereft of moral excellence, his whole nature being warped and irretrievably turned to evil, to offer him any sort of religious honor is contrary to the law of nature and monstrous, while to offer him the supreme homage due to God alone, of which the outward symbol is sacrifice, is the very worst and most detestable form of idolatry.

Though subjectively and on the part of the one who sins, there may be more grievous sins than idolatry, yet objectively and in itself there is, as St. Thomas teaches, no sin so grievous. It is an act of treason against the Divine Majesty. Hence the terrible chastisements inflicted upon men because of it under the old dispensation. Of the Israelites who worshiped the golden calf there were slain in one day about three and twenty thousand (Exod. xxxii, 28). Because of idolatry in the after time "the Lord God cast off all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand

of spoilers, till he cast them away from his face" (IV Kings xvii, 20).

What prompts man to offer worship, whether to God or to a creature, whether idolatrous or not, is either fear or love. In the case of devil-worship, direct or indirect, it is fear alone that impels, for the devil can inspire fear but can not inspire love. In the worship of God, on the other hand, both fear and love may be impelling motives, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and in any case a feeling of awe is closely bound up with the sentiment of religion. But under the New Law especially, which is the law of love, the supreme motive that impels men to worship God is charity, the love of God above all things for His own sake. The love of God thus goes hand in hand with the worship of God, so that where love is wanting worship is purely formal—not worship in spirit and in truth. "These people," is God's plaint about the Israelites of old, "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." And because love is to worship as its very soul, its principle of life, when man loves any creature unduly, gives to the creature that supreme love of preference which God claims as His own, he is said to make an idol of that creature, and becomes guilty of a species of idolatry. Hence the Apostle calls covetousness "a serving of idols" (Eph. v, 5). There is little danger of our falling into that gross idolatry which so grieved the heart of God under the old dispensation. But how many, alas! are there to-day, even among professing Christians, who are "servers of idols" in the sense of the Apostle? Great is Mammon, the god of our modern world, and great, even past counting, are the multitudes who worship at his shrine. "The desire of money," the Apostle tells us, "is the root of all evil," and "they that will become rich," *i. e.*, have set their hearts on amassing wealth, "fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which drown men in destruction and perdition." This is the idolatry that we must be on our guard against to-day more than ever in the worship of wealth. This is the gospel of the world, and to it we must oppose the gospel of Christ, and the example of Christ, who, "being rich, became poor for our sakes." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where the moth consumes and where thieves break through and steal"—such is the burden of His preaching. "But having food and wherewithal to be covered," says His Apostle, "with these we are content." It is the gospel

of the simple life, in which alone is found peace and contentment here below. Let us lay to heart the lesson contained in the parable of the rich man and the beggar. The rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, fared sumptuously every day; the beggar, in his rags, lay at the rich man's gate, and would fain be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table. To both comes death, the leveler, and the scene is changed. The beggar rests in Abraham's bosom; the rich man is buried in hell.

II. Worship is the homage which goodness claims as its due. God is the all-good, and therefore claims supreme homage or worship, which is known as *latría*. But creatures, too, are good, and some creatures there are that possess the kind of goodness—virtue, namely, or moral worth—which merits the homage of rational beings. Such, in a pre-eminent sense, are “the spirits of the just made perfect,” the saints and the holy angels who dwell with God. *Honor to whom honor is due*—this is the principle, rooted in reason itself, on which rests the veneration which we Catholics pay to the saints. And the veneration which we pay them is a species of religious worship. It is akin to that which we pay to God himself, though immeasurably lower. They are with God; they are the friends of God; they see Him face to face; they share in His glory; they are good with His goodness, having been made “partakers of the divine nature” in a far fuller and richer sense than His servants here below. It is fitting, therefore, it is consonant with reason, it is a dictate of religion, that they should be honored. There is no taint of superstition or of idolatry in the veneration we pay to the saints. Those who think so, those who say so, either do not know what superstition means and what idolatry means, or they have an altogether false idea of the nature of the honor we give to the saints. We worship God as the fountain of all goodness; we venerate the saints for the goodness that is theirs as derived from God. We read in Scripture that Josue fell on his face to the ground and worshiped, *i. e.*, did homage to an angel who described himself as “a prince of the host of the Lord” (Josue v, 13-15). Our blessed Lord himself tells us that the saints are “equal to the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke xx, 36). In honoring the sons of God, we honor God himself, for the honor given to sons is reflected upon their father. To distinguish it from the honor given to God, the honor shown to the angels and saints is called *dulia*.

But not only do we Catholics venerate the saints; we invoke them also, we ask them to pray for us. The Council of Trent teaches that "the saints reigning with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men; that it is good and profitable suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers and assistance in order to obtain favors from God through His Son Jesus Christ Our Lord, who is our only Redeemer and Saviour" (Sess. xxv). This doctrine stands to reason. But mark the words "good and profitable." The invocation of saints is, therefore, not necessary, for Jesus Christ is "our only Redeemer and Saviour." The saints are God's friends, dear to Him beyond the power of words to tell. They have laid up treasures, untold treasures, for themselves in heaven; they are rich in spiritual goods, in the goods of God's kingdom, and their charity, which we know to have been so great and far-reaching in this life, is made perfect in heaven. Good and profitable it must be, then, for us to crave at their hands a share in those spiritual goods wherein we are conscious of being so poor. Surely the law of analogy holds throughout life, and what is everywhere true in this world must, in due proportion, be true in the next. Do we not find that those who are poor in the goods of this world go to those who are rich for help in their distress? And is it not in keeping with the plan of God's providence that the rich should give to the poor? Even so it is part of His providence that the saints in heaven, who are rich in the goods of that everlasting kingdom, should make us poor ones partakers of their riches. And even as beggars, the blind, the maimed, and the halt, gather at the door of some great cathedral in Latin lands to crave an alms of those who enter, so we, blinded and maimed by sin, conscious of our spiritual destitution, raise suppliant hands to the saints who reign with Christ, as we beg of them, one by one, in their litany, to *make intercession for us*.

But there is one who is Queen of God's kingdom, Queen of the angels and of the saints, Mother of God, to whom, therefore, there is due a special kind of veneration which is known as *hyperdulia*, for she, as a poet has happily said, "all but adoring love may claim." "Behold," she foretold herself, "from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." We do, then, but fulfil the will of God, as announced in prophecy, when we invoke her as our holy Queen and the Mother of Mercy—yea, our life, our sweetness, and our hope, of course in a secondary and derived sense, as being the sweet

Mother of Our Saviour and the morning star of our hope that heralded His dawning. Her very face and form, as Cardinal Newman says, speak to us of the Eternal, and she is set, as it were, at the head of the way that leads to Him, with a creature's comeliness and luster suited to our state. If the earthly king, Assuerus, for love of Esther, his queen, granted her petition when she besought him for the lives of her people, how much more will our heavenly King grant to the prayers of our Queen and Mother the salvation of those who have recourse to her. "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin."

III. We have seen that moral worth alone merits honor or worship. The moral worth of God is not only intrinsic in His being, but sovereign and independent. The moral worth of the saints, while limited and dependent because derived from God, is yet intrinsic, that is to say, is really their own. Hence the honor we pay them is not relative but absolute, as founded upon intrinsic moral worth. In other words, we honor them not merely for God's sake, whose goodness they mirror forth, but also for their own sakes, as possessing a real goodness of their own. But there is moral worth which is wholly relative, which a thing has solely from its relation to that in which such moral worth actually exists, *i. e.*, to some person, for virtue or moral worth is an attribute of persons, not of things. A thing we may not honor absolutely and for its own sake, but only relatively and for the sake of the person with whom it is in some way or other connected. When we pay religious honor or worship to a thing, the worship is purely relative. Such is that which is given to sacred images and relics. There are many ways in which a thing may be related to a person, but they may be conveniently reduced to these two classes: (1) things may stand for or represent persons, as in the case of emblems or symbols, images, statues; (2) things may have belonged to or have been in contact with a person, as portions of the bones or garments of a saint, the wood of the true Cross, etc.

When we honor or venerate relics and images, we do so, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the persons whose relics or images they are. To accuse us of the contrary is gross calumny. But there is something peculiar about images, in that they represent, *i. e.*, make present to us, or stand for, the person of their original. It is not the material image we honor or worship, the marble, or

canvas, or color; it is the person in the image. The same is true of symbols. Who does not know of the military custom of saluting the flag? The flag stands for the country. Could anyone be so silly as to fancy that it is the country itself which flutters in the breeze? Yet when the flag is honored it is deemed, and justly, that the country is honored; and conversely, to insult the flag is to insult the country. So with religious images. "Tell me, then," says Cardinal Newman, "what is meant by burning bishops, or cardinals, or popes in *effigy*? . . . How is it childish to honor an image, if it is not childish to dishonor it?" The eyes of the body rest on the figure in the image, the canvas or colors of the painting; the eye of the mind, illumined by faith, pierces beyond these, and rests upon the person of the Divine Redeemer, the Blessed Virgin, or some saint. On Good Friday the Church adores the Cross or crucifix, and addresses it as representing or holding the place of the Saviour Himself. The ceremony is in principle the same as saluting the flag. "The very flower and cream of Protestantism," says Newman, "used to glory in the statue of King William, on College Green, Dublin, and though I can not make my reference in print, I recollect well what a shriek they raised some years ago when the figure was unhorsed. Some profane person one night applied gunpowder, and blew the king right out of his saddle, and he was found by those who took interest in him, like Dagon, on the ground. You might have thought the poor senseless block had life to see the way people took on about it, and how they spoke of his face, and his arms, and his legs; yet those same Protestants, I say, would at the same time be horrified had I used 'he' and 'him' of a crucifix, and would call me one of the monsters described in the Apocalypse did I but honor my living Lord as they their dead king."

Catholic veneration of relics, then, and of images, far from being silly, or superstitious, or idolatrous, is, on the contrary, conformable to right reason and to human custom. Who does not treasure up and set a great value on even a lock of hair, or the most trifling object, that once belonged to some loved one—parent, lover, relative or friend? And again, do not men, in their human way, as Newman has pointed out, speak of a person's image as if it were the person himself? Are they not in the habit of saying, "This is my father," or "my mother," or "my cousin," instead of saying, "This is my father's picture" or "my mother's picture"? When we venerate the relics of saints or sacred images, we do but follow a

custom established among men, and transfer it to a higher sphere of action. Out of a human sentiment we fashion a practise of supernatural devotion.

No Catholic household should be without its crucifix and its images of Jesus and Mary. They serve more than anything else to put vividly before us the great truths of faith, to awaken pious thoughts, to bring us into daily and hourly contact with Jesus Our Saviour and His Blessed Mother. They are, besides, a mute but eloquent witness of the faith that molds our lives. It is painful to enter a Christian home and find it bare of these images, or to find the place of honor given to profane and sometimes sensuous pictures. This is to say in so many words, as the children of Israel said of old, when they prostrated themselves before the golden calf: "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of the house of bondage."

VIII. THE VIRTUE OF HOPE: SINS AGAINST HOPE

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope."—Rom. xv, 13.

SYNOPSIS.—Man is bound to worship God not only by Faith and Charity, but likewise by Hope. God has given man a supernatural destiny and the means to attain it. The Beatific Vision consists in the enjoyment of the knowledge and friendship of God. This not due to man nor within his capacity as a natural being. Definition of Hope—its elements; its object, i. e., the possession of God, the company of the saints and the gift of sanctifying grace. The motives of Hope are the power, mercy and promise of God. Sins against this virtue of Hope are: (1) lack of exercise of the virtue; (2) despair; (3) presumption. Hope and the habitual sinner. Exhortation to the constant practise of this noble virtue.

We are bound as Christians, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, to worship God by the special exercise of the three Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity. Faith, by which we accept and assent to those holy teachings that He has deigned to reveal to us concerning His own divine nature, our relations to Him as our supernatural end, and the great scheme of our salvation; Hope, by which, with confident expectation, we desire and look forward to the eternal possession of Him in heaven; Charity, by which even here below we are closely united to Him in the bonds of a mutual love. It is of the Christian virtue of hope that I am to speak to you to-day; and it will be well for us at the beginning to recall the fact, of which you already have been frequently reminded during this course of instructions, that as Christians and Catholics we have been raised to a far higher order of things than that to which we belong by nature. We have been lifted up out of the plane of the natural, to the plane of the supernatural.

This means, first and foremost, that God has destined us, His creatures, for a lot, a glorious lot, immeasurably higher than anything either due to us as human beings, or possible of attainment by us with our own unaided natural powers. That lot, most sublime destiny, is nothing less than the beatific vision of God as He is. For this, and nothing less, He made us: to this destiny were we raised in the persons of our first parents. The beatific vision is

described in various ways in Holy Scripture. St. Paul (I Cor. xiii, 12) speaks of it as "knowing God even as he knows us"; implying thereby a deeply intimate and direct knowledge of the divine essence. In the same passage the holy Apostle tells us that we shall see God "face to face." St. John (I John iii, 2) thus writes of this vision or sight of God: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is." In other words, that direct and very perfect knowledge of God as He is will transform our very being into the likeness of God himself. Let us dwell a moment on this thought, the thought of the vision, the intimate heart to heart knowledge of the living God, for it is that which is the chief and primary object of all our hopes; it is that which will ultimately satisfy every noble desire and yearning of our souls. What a consolation it is, in the troubles of life, and in the joys of life what an added delight, to have a dear friend with whom we can share both alike—a friend who has no secrets from us, whose heart is one with our own. And if that friend be one of lovely and noble character, what a joy it is to be always discovering new qualities in him that are a reason for increased love and admiration! How greatly the intimate knowledge and love of such a character can lift us up and ennoble us! What a constant source of the highest and purest happiness is such a friendship!

Dear brethren, this is but a faint picture of that relationship of intimate friendship into which we shall be brought by the beatific vision; friendship, not with a mere man, not with the highest and holiest of our fellow creatures, but with the great God of heaven and earth, our Maker, our Father, our Redeemer.

But, as I have said, this is a consummation not in any way *due* to us. Had God willed to leave us simply in the natural order, our destiny would have been to know Him indirectly through His wonderful and beautiful creation, and to love Him with a love proportionate to that lower kind of knowledge. Also, to repeat it once more, the beatific vision is a consummation to which we have no natural capacity of attaining. It is a matter of knowledge—of a mode of knowing God similar to that mode in which He knows himself; a direct contemplation of His glory without the medium of any created thing, however beautiful and however perfectly reflecting the uncreated beauty. What capacity can a finite creature

have of thus knowing and contemplating the infinite God? None; none whatever, unless God himself by His omnipotence supply that capacity by supernatural gifts drawn from the riches of His goodness. Thus, then, dear brethren, into the scheme of what we term the supernatural order, enter also certain supernatural endowments which God has given us to enable us to reach the sublime destiny to which we are called and for which He has created all men; endowments which raise up our natural faculties to a supernatural condition and empower them to perform supernatural acts. Thus are we raised to that supernatural plane along which we have to travel in order to come to the vision of God. Such supernatural gifts were given for this purpose to our first parents, who were to have handed them down intact to us. By the sin of Adam they were lost; by the obedience of the second Adam, our divine Saviour, they have been restored.

Foremost among those gifts is that of sanctifying grace. Together with this we receive the virtues of faith, hope and charity. All of these, dear brethren, remember this, all of these are directed to the one great end of our existence—God himself—God, known to us not only through creation, as Maker and Lord, but God known, now indeed under the veil of faith, hereafter in heaven as He is, as our loving Father and Friend, showing to us the hidden things of His own nature, unveiling to us the riches of His divinity. Even in heaven the blessed need a supernatural gift to enable them to see and know God as He is: that gift is called the “gift of glory.” Here on earth faith, and hope, and charity are the beginnings of that heavenly knowledge and possession and love that will one day be ours.

But now let us ask, What is the special position of the Christian virtue of hope among the supernatural gifts by the right use of which we are to attain salvation? It will be seen at once, upon a moment’s reflection, that hope, like faith, is a virtue peculiar to this life, to the state of probation, to that condition of travelers along the way to heaven in which we now are. When the King in His beauty is before us, there will be no place for faith, for we shall then see Him in whom, seeing not, we have believed. Possessing for all eternity Him who will be our reward exceeding great, our hope will be fulfilled for “what a man seeth, why doth he hope for?” Charity will remain, exalted, intensified, rapturous in the knowledge and possession of Him whom we have so long desired.

What, then, is hope? Hope, in general, is the well-founded and confident expectation of some future good thing. Moreover, it is characteristic of hope that the thing hoped for should present some difficulty of attainment. We can scarcely be said to hope for a thing which without any effort or striving is sure to come into our possession. Again, what we hope for must be something possible of attainment. A poor workingman in one of our large cities or a country laborer will not look upon the idea of his becoming the Czar of all the Russias as one presenting any hope whatever of realization.

All these elements, characteristic of the feeling we call hope, are also to be found in the supernatural Christian virtue that goes by the same name. The good to which we look forward is a future good; the goal of our life and pilgrimage; it is a good that presents difficulty of attainment; it requires struggle and effort. Is it not, indeed, hope itself that rouses up the soul to an energetic striving to overcome all obstacles? Again, in spite of difficulties, the great object in view, salvation, is one possible to attain; yes, more than possible; it is one to which we are *sure* to attain if we do our part. This gives to Christian hope that characteristic element of sure and confident expectation of the fulfilment of our desire. Faith having enlightened the intellect and presented to the mind and intelligence the object to be striven for, and the means of attaining that object, Christian hope influences the will and endows it with those sentiments and impulses that I have now described. Let me sum this up in the words of a lamented and eminent writer, the late Bishop Bellord:

"The supernatural virtue of hope," he writes (*Meditations on Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii, p. 168), ". . . is not a positive assurance of attaining; it is a *desire, joined with confidence and expectation*, encouraging the soul to make the necessary effort; it presupposes that there are difficulties to be surmounted, and it prevents the soul from being cast down by them."

Where, indeed, should we be, dear brethren, without this holy virtue of hope? How could we dare lift our eyes to the everlasting hills, and ever think that we could mount their summits and sit down to reign with God in His kingdom? But this we can and do confidently expect, in virtue of this holy gift of supernatural hope that God in His holy providence has infused into our souls. Let us thank Him for it, and cultivate His gift as He would have

us do. It will be to us the pledge of victory; it will be to us, in that stern battle we have to fight against the terrible forces of evil within and without us, like that moral tone which sometimes pervades an army having full confidence in its cause and in its leaders, a sure presage of success. It will supply, in the spiritual life, something akin to that indomitable high-spiritedness which, in the natural order, arises from youth and health, and is so good to see. Alas! how often do we witness the defeat of these qualities in their battle with the world, and their gradual disappearance before the sad experiences of life! But for the Christian there need be no such defeat. When the world has done its worst, when natural hopes and worldly ambitions have withered away, when youth has departed and age is creeping on, Christian hope will still be strong, looking beyond the veil, grasping the *substance* by the side of which all things earthly are but vain and empty shadows.

It is now time to inquire, dear brethren, what is the special object of the Christian virtue of hope, and what are its motives? In other words, what do we so confidently hope for, and why? Of course, God himself is in some way the special and direct object of this virtue, as He is also of the virtues of faith and charity, which for that reason have the characteristic name of theological virtues. The theological virtues are divinely infused qualities, not merely helping us to serve God aright, like such virtues as temperance, prudence, justice and the rest, but bringing us now into direct contact and communication with God as our supernatural end. By faith we are brought into communion with God as the object of our intelligence which seizes by faith truths concerning the divine nature that would otherwise be unattainable by us.

By charity we begin that loving union of mutual friendship, and enter into the relationship of sons of God that will be perfected and consummated above. By hope, with which we are concerned to-day, we are enabled to set God himself before us as the object of our lives, as the goal of our desires, as the reward that we longingly and confidently expect. On the riches of the mercy and goodness of Our God, who even in this life brings us into such close intimacy with himself. Truly the Christian's life is heaven already begun. From the conditions of this our life and pilgrimage, the object of hope—that is, *what we hope for*—is threefold. Primarily we hope for the possession of God, in which salvation and eternal life essentially consist. But we hope also for the company

of the blessed and of the angelic hosts, for freedom from sorrow and temptation and the possibility of sin and all other happiness that will flow from the possession of the source of all good. And, lastly, we hope also for all the means of salvation—for grace and forgiveness and final perseverance. Nor are temporal blessings excluded from supernatural hope, so long as they are desired and hoped for as means and aids to eternal life. Such, then, are the objects of our hope. And as the objects of Christian hope are of the highest, so are its motives of the strongest. Why have we the loving confidence of hope? Because the grounds of our hope are nothing less than the almighty power, the infinite mercy, and the faithful promises of our heavenly Father. "Thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in hope" (Ps. iv, 10). "But," someone may say, "salvation does not depend upon God alone. The fulfilment of my hopes depends also upon myself. I may fail; I may sin, and even die in my sins and be lost. What security can I have?"

Dear brethren, there are two things that we can not demand of God, nor justly expect from Him. We can not ask Him to compel us to be saved; to take away our free will. Nor can we ask Him to reveal to us the future and show us whether we shall be saved or lost. It suffices us to know that God has promised us the means of salvation, and that nothing but the obstinate rejection of His grace and love, and the obstinate persistence in sin to the end, can cause the loss of our souls. Are we sinners? Yes. But the whole scheme of redemption is for the benefit of sinners. Are we great sinners? Perhaps. Then, if we do but repent, and turn to God, and do what in us lies, our very sin and misery will be the strongest claim upon His mercy, and the greatest ground, through the passion and death of Jesus Christ, of our hope of pardon and salvation.

Hell was not made for sinful men, but for the devil and his angels. By the death of our blessed Saviour, the gates of heaven are thrown open to receive repentant sinners, reconciled by the precious Blood. Over one such there is in heaven more joy than over ninety and nine just ones who need no repentance. True, we must repent, and we must distrust our own weakness and instability; we must also fear and dread the just vengeance of God upon the impenitent. But distrust of ourselves will lead us to put all our confidence in God, while the thought of the punishments of the lost should make us throw ourselves without reserve into the

abyss of love and compassion that leads our Father to meet the prodigal when he is yet a great way off.

In conclusion, dear brethren, we will briefly consider what are the sins that violate the duties involved in the exercise of Christian hope. First, I will speak of the sin of neglect in the practise of this virtue. It is possible to neglect God's gifts: to let them lie fallow, as it were, so that they produce little or no fruit in our lives. Although we can not acquire the Christian virtues by our own efforts, yet, when God has supernaturally produced them in our souls, He expects us to make use of them. To do this also we need His grace; but with that grace we have to co-operate. From a virtue there should proceed *acts* of that virtue, and in the production of these acts we have our part to play. God having given us the virtue of hope, we ought actively to rouse up in ourselves those sentiments that are involved in a real and true hope. The impulses of divine grace enabling us to do this will not be wanting; but, to repeat it, we must co-operate by our own willing efforts. It is the teaching, moreover, of many great theologians, that facility in the exercise of the Christian virtues depends very greatly upon frequent practise. We should, therefore, make daily and frequent acts of hope; by meditation and pious reading we should keep constantly before us the great object of our hopes, and the strong grounds upon which those hopes are based. I need not point out how immensely our spiritual life would gain by this practise; by the determined, may I say even business-like, cultivation of the inward sentiments and dispositions that pertain to the Christian virtues, and among them to this great and important virtue of hope. May we not safely say that the discouraging slowness of our progress is often due precisely to the neglect of the exercise of hope—the very virtue that God has given us to make us “run in the way of his commandments.”

Two sins are especially contrary to the virtue of hope. They are despair and presumption. In their extreme forms they destroy the virtue altogether, just as infidelity destroys faith, and, with it, hope as well. Despair is an act of the mind, consciously putting away from itself the hope of eternal life. It may be the consequence of a contempt for salvation or of a loss of confidence in God's mercy and promises; so that a man says to himself, “It is impossible that I should be saved.” A man may even go so far as to no longer desire salvation; and the great St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that

this terrible state of mind is frequently the result of sins against the holy virtue of purity. One who is wholly given up to the satisfaction of bestial passions no longer cares for salvation. May God in His great mercy preserve us from the sin of despair in any of its forms. Let us, for our own peace, dear brethren, not confound despair with discouragement. They are quite different things, and it would be indeed a calamity for any poor soul that is merely discouraged to imagine that discouragement to be the sin of despair. If there are any here tempted in that way, I say to them, seek a wise and prudent confessor, and lay open your troubles to him. In this you will find the best of remedies for that spiritual sickness.

Presumption may be committed in two ways. A man who should hope for heaven without the help of God, and suppose that his own efforts would gain salvation, would be guilty of the sin of presumption in a very extraordinary degree; and it is scarcely possible to think that any believer in God and heaven would come to such a pass unless he were insane, and therefore irresponsible. The same may be said of anyone who should hope for salvation without repentance for past sin, or with obstinate perseverance in sin to the end. But there is a kind of presumption into which it is not impossible for a Christian to fall; though in this form the sin does not altogether destroy the virtue. It consists in this, that a man hopes for that which God has not promised, namely, space and time for repentance after continued unrepented sin—a death-bed repentance. We may not depend on this. "*Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation."

Lastly, dear brethren, I will deal with a difficulty which is frequently felt. A man is sinning—giving way to some sin that is habitual with him. He does not in the least mean to give up his sin—indeed, he means to sin again; but he entertains some vague notion of escape and pardon. This would be a sin of presumption, and the man's guilt in God's sight is increased thereby. But take the case of a man who, though sinning, does not intend to continue to sin; means to repent and confess and cease from sinning; hoping thereby to be reconciled to God. That is not presumption; and the man's guilt is not increased but diminished by these sentiments.

Let us remember, dear brethren, that Christian hope is a commandment of God—a strict precept. Lest we should not dare to

hope, God has laid upon us this law of hope. It is a precept inculcated innumerable times in Holy Scripture. "Let us," therefore, to use the inspired words of St. Paul, "let us, who are of the day, be sober, having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (I Thess. v, 8).

IX. THE LOVE OF GOD

BY THE REV. C. P. BRUEHL, D.D.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before me."

SYNOPSIS.—*Peculiar character of the First Commandment. Rather an appeal from the dear Heavenly Father who loves us.*

I. Warning against idolatry of the heart. God the Supreme Master of our being. Each faculty owes Him its peculiar tribute. Tribute of the heart is love. God not only asks service and submission, but surrender of the heart. God our supreme good, to be embraced by love. The strange gods are the idols of the heart—men and things, that alienate our affections from God. God should have no rival in our love.

II. The wonderful effects of love. (a) It unifies the Commandments and harmonizes our manifold duties. (b) It lightens the burden of our obligations, because it kindles enthusiasm in our hearts. The yoke of Christ is sweet. (c) It enhances the value of our actions. Everything done from love acceptable to God.

Conclusion.—*Let us enter into the spirit of the Commandments, which is love.*

The first commandment may at first sight seem severe and harsh in its wording, and even more so in its meaning. In it we perceive the echoes of the thundering voice of the jealous God of Israel. Yet if we read the full text of this commandment in the Bible we can not fail to detect in it a note of tenderness. God no longer commands, but He pleads with the Israelites; He reminds them of His loving care, of the numerous benefits He has bestowed upon them: "I am the Lord thy God, who has conducted thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, but who shows mercy to those who love me and keep my commandments, unto the thousandth generation." There is a peculiar blending of severity and tenderness in these words; at times they exhibit all the characteristics of an austere precept; then again they become a most pathetic appeal. We begin to understand; yes, it is a commandment; but it is the commandment of a father, whose authority is tempered by kindness; it is the commandment of a God, who is love.

Thus we will not be astonished if we are told that God in this first commandment not so much demands service and submission, as love and loyalty of the heart. He is, indeed, the Lord and Master; and we are His creatures and servants; but, moreover, He is the Father, and He delights in calling Himself so; and we are His children. And if a master jealously seeks the honor that is due to him, a father not less zealously requires the love of his children. Viewed in this light the first commandment assumes a brighter and more engaging aspect. And it is our most delightful task to study this great commandment and to look upon it in the glorious light of love.

I. "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before me." Solemnly God protests against every shape of idolatry; that is, against the worship of foreign gods. Has He not proved Himself to be a good God and a mighty protector? Has He not been their Father in the desert, mindful of all their needs? Has He not given them the land where they dwell? Has He not subdued their enemies and blessed their harvests? Why should they seek other gods? Has the God of Israel not conquered the gods of the Philistines and the surrounding nations? Why should they worship fallen gods, whose thrones have been overthrown? Nothing could be more reasonable than this accentuation of the exclusiveness of the worship of the one true, almighty and good God. It is not a mere command; it is a holy contract; it is a solemn pledge of a sovereign to his subjects. We may interpret it in the following way: "I, the strong one, whose arm is mighty, the conqueror and the lord of hosts, who shields those that call upon him in the days of persecution, I will be your God, the God of Israel, if you adore and worship me, and if you forsake the gods of the conquered nations." Can the choice be difficult? Let us adhere and be loyal to our God, who will be our father and our helper in all needs.

Yea; He shall be our God and we will worship Him; we will render Him willingly and readily the tribute He demands. We are His creatures; we owe our very being to His goodness. What have we that we have not received from Him. We belong to Him entirely, body and soul, understanding and imagination, will and heart. All our faculties come from Him. Our hands should be folded in silent adoration; our lips should utter His name; our mind should honor and acknowledge Him; our imagination should admire His

wisdom in the universe; our will should embrace Him; our heart should love Him. As a tree yields its peculiar fruit to him who plants it, so must the peculiar activities of our different faculties have God as an object and aim. Each faculty has its own way of worshipping: the intellect believes, the memory praises, the will adores, the heart loves. The heart is the central power of our being. It rules our life. Its impulses are the guiding stars of our actions. The heart must go first; after that will come in order the mind, the will, the action. To whom belongs our heart? To Him we belong completely, unreservedly, absolutely. As long as our heart is neutral, our adherence to a cause or a person is but superficial, weak, fickle. Thus God will be our absolute and supreme master, He must above all be the master of our heart. And from this central point of our being He can rule our actions, direct our desires and shape our aims. God is not our God at all, unless He is the God of our heart. He does not possess us, unless He has His finger on our heart, the mainspring of our activity. Hence, "I am the Lord thy God," means emphatically, "I am the God of thy heart."

God demands our heart; that is, He asks our love. A tyrant may be satisfied with the mere submission and outward obedience of his subjects. Thus of Caligula, a Roman emperor, the saying is recorded: "Oderint, dum metuant," "Little do I care if my subjects hate me, as long as they only fear me." That was the rule of the iron rod, hateful and precarious. God's rule is a rule of love, a sweet yoke and an easy burden. God wishes to inspire love, not fear. He looks for cheerful servants, for enthusiastic followers, not trembling slaves. Therefore, the first tribute He requires is that of love. There is an external service of God, in word and gesture, pleasing to Him, it is true, but yet only an outward figure and a shadow. Then there is an internal service of God, consisting in faith, hope and charity, in devotion and loyalty. This is the adoration in spirit and in truth, the soul of religion, the quickening pulse of all outward practises. The external service alone can never satisfy God; the internal allegiance will necessarily blossom out in religious exercises. So God demands our love, the surrender of our heart, and at once He possesses the whole man.

If God is our Lord and Master, He can not be content with anything short of our love. For the master we reserve the very best. So we should offer to God the most tender sentiments, the noblest affections, the purest emotions: that is love. Love is the sweet

blossom of our heart. Well, it belongs to God; for He is the Master. The perfume of our very being, exhaled from the depths of our soul, shall rise to God. Not gold is the tribute worthy of the supreme Lord; but the best and most precious gift in our possession alone is becoming the Most High, our very heart, our love. We do not dispute the right of God to demand the best we have; we would be astonished if He asked for less. He is the Lord Our God.

He is the Lord; yea, but He is also Our God. God means sovereign good; the idea of God embodies all that is desirable, all that is worthy of affection, all that is amiable. Everything we love on earth is but a faint reflection of His beauty. Every good gift comes from Him. God should be our first desire, our profoundest wish, our deepest yearning. Our hands should reach out to Him; our hearts should press to Him; all the currents of our being should make for Him. There should be nothing to attract us outside of Him. God is good; good without alloy. In Him our heart will rest. God has fashioned it to love Him; it should beat in harmony with God's eternal love and find everlasting calm in the clasp of the divine embrace. Would we could fully understand the attractiveness of God's beauty, and our hearts would be irresistibly borne away by the triumphant fascination of His glory. We would adore, we would worship, we would love, and cry out with the seraphic saint: "My God, and my All."

"Thou shalt not have strange gods." Who are these strange gods which the true God detests? They are the idols of our heart, men and things that divert our affections from God; they are our perverted, sinful loves, that divide our heart and plant themselves between God and us. They steal the holy fire from the sanctuary of our heart and kindle an unhallowed flame before false images and deceiving phantoms. Nay, we will not have strange gods; we will not allow the fibers of our heart to become entangled in the vain things of this earth. It is folly, if it were not sin, to attach our heart to beings, that perish, to idols, that are but fleeting shadows, to gods, unable to make us happy.

God shall have no rival in our affections. God shall be first always. Him we will love best. The first thought in the morning—God! The last thought at night—God! The inspiring thought all through my time of toil and solitude, through the dark moments of suffering and weariness, lighting them up as the sun lights the hours of the day is to be the thought of God. This thought will be

as a flower growing in our heart and filling it with rich perfume; it will be as a never-setting sun, a never-fading star, giving warmth, splendor, glory to our life. Can there be anything sweeter, more endearing, than this first commandment, by which God demands to be our only love, our first thought, our highest aim? He asks us for the sake of our own happiness and peace. This object is not dominion, not the ambition of supremacy, not the lust of rule; His purpose, the wish of God's great heart, is to render His creatures and children happy by the wealth and glory of His love.

II. The importance of the love of God for the religious life is paramount. There is divine wisdom and foresight in the arrangement and order of the Commandments. In the first place we find the commandment enforcing the love of God. From this all the other obligations, manifold and seemingly disconnected, follow logically. The commandment of love contains as a germ all the other commandments. Love unifies the service of God and man; it makes the commandments easy and stern duty sweet; it gives a higher dignity and greater value to the fulfilment of our various obligations.

The number of the commandments may bewilder and vex our minds; their diversity may elude our attention. We feel ourselves fenced in by a wall of defensive rules. But interpret them by the word love and they become impregnated with life; they become glorious lights to shine upon our way. Love is the soul of the Ten Commandments. If we have love in our heart they all seem one, there is no longer any irritating complexity, no wearying diversity. They all seem natural, logical, necessary. Is it not true, that if we love God, we will worship Him, we will adore Him, we will keep holy His day, we will honor His name and bless Him? Why, love is all this, and it is more. Love is adoration, it is praise, worship, service, prayer. It is difficult to find our way through our numerous moral obligations, unless guided by the light of love: every step will confront us with some unforeseen, exasperating prohibition, everywhere we will find bars and impediments. Our feet will be entangled in the Ten Commandments as in a net or a trap. But let love guide us and shine before us; then the path is clear, our road direct. We advance without difficulty, we make giant strides, because there is no impediment. Love fuses all the Ten Commandments into one golden rule, easy to handle and easy to apply. Love need not be reminded of duties, it need not be warned nor cautioned;

it provides for all occasions that may arise. In one word, love is the unifying principle, the animating soul of the Ten Commandments.

Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the Old Testament Commandments. Instead of alleviating, He aggravates our obligations in many instances. His is a severer, a more detailed, a more perfect law. He is very exacting and will not allow one iota of the law to be neglected. He claims that our perfection must be greater than that of the Pharisees. And yet He calls His burden a light one, and His yoke sweet. And this is true. For the Jews could not, it seems, keep the Ten Commandments, though they tried to keep them. They were afraid of them. They stumbled over them. At best they were outward observers of the law, slaves to the letter of the law. Now things have changed. Christians fulfil the law with alacrity; it comes natural to them to live according to the precept of God. They do not feel themselves encumbered by its regulations nor hampered by its details. They not only outwardly conform to the practises of the law; their heart is in it. Yea, some transcend the law; they accomplish more than what the law requires; many rise to sublime heights, unknown under the Old Testament rule. But how has this wonderful change been wrought? It has been brought about by the powerful, subtle influence of love. Christ emphasizes our obligations, it is true; but, then, He sweetened them by love. Learn to love, and the commandments will fulfil themselves. He who loves knows no difficulties. There is a consuming flame in his heart. Sacrifice has nothing terrifying. Love urges onward. It does not perceive the roughness of the road; it does not feel the weight of the burden, nor the heat of the noon. Love is untiring and persevering. It does not count the hours of work nor the days of stress. It makes for the goal. There is determination in love, unyielding energy, a fierce enthusiasm, that can not be subdued. It was the masterpiece of God's wisdom, that He made love the cornerstone of the Commandments. Thereby he renewed, rejuvenated the Old Testament law and gave it a development that had not even been suspected. Now not only the hands and feet are engaged in the service of God, but the heart as well. The Commandments lose their forbidding aspect because they become a maker of affection. "Love is the fulfilling of the law. Love can not work evil; love can not offend." Love can not sin. "Dilige, et fac quod vis," says Saint Augustin. Love, follow its divine promptings, and do as you will. Love will not allow you to ne-

glect your duties. "If you love me, keep my commandments" (Joh. xiv, 15). "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love" (Joh. xv, 10). The fulfilling of the law and the love of God can not be separated. The law without love is a mere shadow. Love without the law is but a name, a glittering bubble. Let us thank God that He has given us this glorious love, that lightens the burden of His commandments and sweetens His precepts. Let us walk in the spirit of His love, that we may easily bear the yoke of His law. "For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not heavy" (Joh. v, 3).

If we have not love we are nothing. Holiness is love. Great deeds count not before God, if they do not proceed from love. Love gives a peculiar value to the smallest and meanest action. A glass of water, offered in a spirit of love, is most acceptable in the sight of God. Only the works that bear the stamp of love are chronicled by the recording angel. Love is a mysterious, magic wand, that converts our most trifling actions into the gold of merit. A service springing from love is what God requires. I care nothing for the obedience of a child when he only does what I ask because he is afraid of me. I care greatly for his obedience when he does my will because he loves and trusts me. God asks obedience and love. And love makes our works beautiful in His eyes. Let us serve God because we love Him; let us love Him because He is good. "And love covereth a multitude of sins." A startling saying from the lips of the Prince of the Apostles (I Pet. iv, 8). What does it mean? Love is fervor; and it will readily atone for the wrong that has been done. It will double its exertions and put forth all its efforts to regain what was lost. "Much is forgiven this woman," cried Jesus, "because she loved much." God forgets the delinquencies of the past, when He sees the ardor of the present. If we have sinned and failed, if we have lost many precious days, if we have gone astray and become weary in the paths of godlessness, let us return at once to the service of God, let us love Him with a new and strong fervor, let us consecrate to Him the days and hours that may be vouchsafed us, and God will blot out the sad record of our shortcomings. If we have sinned much, we must love more and serve God more faithfully; and our sin can not harm us, for love is stronger than sin.

The Old Testament never fully understood the glorious Com-

mandments of God. To the Jews they were isolated, hard rules, heavy yokes, under which they grudgingly bowed their necks. Christ has brought the golden key to disclose their mysterious meaning—it was love. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of love; and this spirit also pervades the Ten Commandments. How beautiful are these Commandments when interpreted by love! They are no longer barren rules, but instinct with life; they kindle into beauty and blossom forth in glory. We do not obey them simply outwardly; we treasure and cherish them in our hearts. They are the means by which we may become like to our heavenly Father, by which we may show ourselves to be His loving and faithful children. Let us embrace these ten sweet Commandments, coming from our heavenly Father and leading us to Him. Let us thank Him and bless His Holy Name, that He has revealed to us the great secret of His divine Heart, that He has allowed, nay, commanded us to love Him. And let us love Him, tenderly, with heart and soul; let us love Him because He is our Father, our Protector, our supreme Lord and Master: because He is our God, our only God. Let us love Him exclusively; let us not suffer our heart to be divided between Him and His creatures. May this first holy commandment be enshrined in our hearts, and may we always understand it in its true, genuine and profound meaning, which is love. Amen.

X. THE HOLY NAME OF GOD

BY THE REV. G. LEE, C.S.SP.

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."—Matt. vi, 9.

SYNOPSIS.—Our Lord's view, our guide; His way, our lesson. Example of His devotion to His Father's name: Church liturgy and life similar. Holy names used well, used ill: our duty—Reverence, Respect, Love.

I. Reverence for God's name embedded in nature and in grace: Lord of all, holy, terrible. Name ineffable: "discipline of the mouth"; not swear at all. Imprecations, scurrility, blasphemy! Examples of punishment: Sennacherib, Goliath, Julian. Judgment of death: repentance.

II. Respect for God's name: import, consequence of using it. Never in vain, in appeal, adjuration, offering. Perjury against God, also against society: oaths in truth, justice, fidelity: promises prudent and sincere in the making, sacred in observance; vows still more.

III. Love of God's name, best hallowing: glorifying it, leads to glory. Love it as Himself, our Supreme Good: Creator, Father, Protector. Confidence in it begets love; salvation in it, and conquering strength: David's example. God's name of Saviour, Jesus! Unction, sweetness, joy of Holy Name: use of it—and abuse! Saints' delight.

Conclusion.—Make daily "hallowed be thy name" reality and rule; expresses all our duty, especially use of holy names. Fear of God's name, loyal, filial, fond, that we may love Him. Fear Him as Our Lord did, as His Mother did—with the Church's "equal fear and love": then look for the mysterious, crowning promises.

To be right-minded in religious matters is to view them as did Our Lord, for He is the wisdom of God. Even as man He is altogether full of grace and understanding; and as He is explicitly our Way, our Truth, and our Life, there can be no value in the directions, standards, tendencies which we adopt, unless they are modeled and measured on Him. He is, of course, the sovereign exemplar in all His acts and words; yet there are special points which may be taken as peculiarly illustrative of His great lesson. His devotion to His Father's name is characteristic. He most lovingly revered it, most watchfully honored it, most filially championed it. We see that He makes it the first duty of all who would pray aright, the first obligation of all His worshiping brethren, to seek that God's name be sanctified: Hallowed be thy name! And when His own prayer is bursting into the final vehemence of its suffering appeal, the words are: "Father, glorify thy name" (John xii, 28). He even seems to sum up all His labors, all His teaching and ministry,

in this one thing: "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world" (Ib. xvii, 6).

His Church, following, as she always does, in His footsteps, keeps this devotion to the divine name in the very forefront of her doctrine and practise. 'Tis like an abridgment of her liturgy and life. From the early hour at which she baptizes us in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to the last moment when she blesses us in that same name, this devotion is communicated to us by every movement of her lips and by every touch of her hand.

The name of God can evidently be taken for God—as Holy Scripture often takes it—and then devotion to it is simply all religion. But to the pronouncing, the hearing, the ordinary verbal use of it, there attaches and has always attached an immensity of special obligation and special worship. Men may use it well, and they may use it ill; our duty in the matter can be brought before us under the three terms: Reverence, respect, love.

I. Reverence for the name of God is so embedded both in nature and grace, that if its claims are at all understood they are immediately admitted. To name a person is to bring him up before us; and the person named God is our Creator: hence our infinite and infinitely worshipful Master. There is not an atom of our being, either bodily or spiritual, that should not, spontaneously, at the sound of that name cry out, "Lord!" The Psalmist is but voicing the creature's true apostrophe when he exclaims: "O Lord Our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth!" (Ps. viii); and the same creature's necessary reflection should be: "Holy and terrible is his name" (Ps. cx).

With earliest revelation there comes the impressive fact that the Sovereign Being's true name can not be pronounced by men nor given to them. 'Tis tremblingly represented by four mysterious characters to which the High Priest, when in the Temple, may give awe-struck sound: other worshipers must reverently use substitutes for the ineffable word. The great fear of desecrating God's name, implied in this practise, had undeniably an abiding influence on the speech and also on the thought of the people. When their all-holy Lord was recalled to them they instantly bowed their heads and restrained their tongues. If other idle words were not blameless, surely the idle pronouncing of so awful a name could not escape condemnation. In what is styled "the discipline of the

mouth," their wise men instructed the Jews not to let "the naming of God be usual" with them, nor to "be accustomed to swearing"; for "everyone that sweareth, and nameth, shall not be wholly pure from sin." And "a man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity; and a scourge shall not depart from his house" (Ecclus. xxiii).

Now, though Christians approach God with more filial familiarity than did the Jews, their use of His name should certainly be none the less observant: rather should it be more delicately, more tenderly reverential. Why introduce it uselessly, trivially? If as a prayerful exclamation, then let it clearly be a prayer. And as to idle swearing, hear the Son of Man recommending us not to swear at all, because whatever we may swear by has some relation to Our God. It should be, as He indicates, unnecessary, since "Yes—yes," "No—no" suffices; and, as things really go among men, it is injurious, for no one believes the trivial, especially the frequent swearer; and his house—that is his company—is under the scourge of having to listen to him.

But if reverence for the name of God prohibits its merely idle use, much more does it prohibit its offensive use. To introduce it in combination with words otherwise vile and sinful is horrid profanity. The common, wretchedly common, practise of uttering it in anger—though it be just but uttered—is an intolerable abuse; yet men who really dislike sin often weakly enslave themselves to that disgusting habit. Of course, anger is a first weakness, and so where it is shown no great manliness can be expected; but if religious principle be for the moment forgotten, the mere proprieties of life, respect for others and for one's own place in human society, should give the strength to keep a mouth closed when what may escape out of it is likely to be malodorous. And like anger, the association of anything unjust or foul with holy names is always deplorable and outrageous. Though their use in such connection be not meant as additional sin, nor perhaps so apprehended, yet a Catholic, given at all to coarse-mouthedness, would do well to remember the ancient warning: "Nor shalt thou defile the name of thy God: I am the Lord" (Lev. xviii, 21). Even St. Paul's word to his disciple, though it has other wide senses, can here have a pertinent application: "Let every one depart from iniquity who nameth the name of the Lord" (II Tim. ii, 19).

Under the head of reverence to God's name there should be little

need of referring to the injury that is worse than irreverence, to the sin which early worshipers were afraid to name, blasphemy. That indeed is a word to no purpose, a scurrility not to be mentioned among those who are called saints. In some languages happily its explicit introduction is not common, though forms of expression which imply it are often assumed both ignorantly and viciously. As a fearfully impious sin it has excited the horror of all creatures who know themselves to be creatures; and accounts of its immediate punishment are current in every land. Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, spoke many things against God and wrote letters full of blasphemy; then an angel cut off his army and drove himself home to be slain by his children. Similarly fared the blaspheming Philistine, Goliath, and the blaspheming apostate, Julian. Many others may be cited from more recent history.

A priest does not like, my brethren, to suppose that any person present needs admonition against this most fatal crime, this most unchristian iniquity. But if some man or boy finds that he makes the least approach to it, he should seriously recall the sovereign decree: "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die" (Lev. xxiv, 16). No doubt the Lord of all mercy offers forgiveness even to blasphemers, though their offense has a certain desperateness about it. Let them, at least, hasten to take advantage of so special a mercy, and be cleansed from this abnormal villainy, doing "penance to give him glory" whose long-suffering is so adorable.

II. Respect for God's name may be taken as something different from that reverence for it which we have been considering. Respect bears particularly on the consequences of introducing Him, by introducing His name, into our proceedings. Things can not be the same as they were before He was called to take part in them, the same as if in their regard no sacred appeal, adjuration, offering, had ever been made. When the Almighty has been invoked, He may be counted *on*, He must be counted *with*; for import necessarily attaches to the drawing down of His name. This truth should be impressed on us by the fact that a special divine precept sanctions its subject-matter. The Second Commandment runs exactly to this point: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"—*in vain*, that is *not in truth*, as St. Augustine explains (Serm. viii); and if not without truth of words and things, neither *without respect*.

That a man who is himself a liar, should in order to be believed call in God's testimony and yet deceive, is an outrage on the eternal truth. The perjurer, as such an offender is styled, makes—as far as it depends on him—his Creator a partner in his deception; and this the All-holy can never endure. Our Lord was putting the extreme case, the absolutely intolerable and impossible case, when He urged on the prevaricating Jews that if He said He did not know His Father, He should be like them—a liar. The perjurer lies and solemnly asks God to father his lie! Surely God is patient.

Besides the unspeakable injury to God's majesty implied in all perjury, there is great wrong done to human society by false witness, especially in public affairs. Under authoritative demand for testimony to swear to what one does not know, or to the contrary of what one does know, is to undermine the civic edifice, to vitiate the first principles of men's intercourse one with another. If no sacredness secures truth in word and declaration, where or how is it to be found? With pagans of any civilization, as with Hebrews and Christians, "an oath for confirmation is the end of all their controversy" (Heb. vi, 16). 'Tis, then, at once a matter of humanity and of religion to exclude perjury and close all its dangerous approaches.

Now our Catechism puts on the same line as taking false oaths another offense that may not seem quite similar: this is, the breaking of lawful oaths. In malice the sins are most closely related, the malice being the absence of respect for God's name, the denial of import to its introduction. Notice, my brethren, how comprehensive is the prohibition to take that name in vain, and how explicit the menace that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless" who shall do so. Guiltless he certainly can not be, though the degree of his guilt may vary according to the *vainness* of his swearing. 'Tis vain, my brethren, to swear in promise to what you can not perform; if you know your inability, your swearing is even false: 'tis most plainly false when you have no intention of doing what you promise. To swear to do what is morally wrong is not only vain but sacrilegious, because of the attempted connection between God's authority and man's iniquity. An immoral act can have no sanction, much less the sanction of a sacred oath; and Catholics in any obscurity on this very practical point should seek enlightenment from their Catechism, if necessary from their con-

fessor. But when the thing promised under oath is possible and right, then wantonly to neglect the doing of it is to disrespect God's name. If He has been called in to bear witness that you will keep a lawful promise, and if it remains lawful and fairly within your power, while you prove unfaithful, how can you escape involving His honor in what people rightly call your perjury and perfidy? Be careful, therefore, my brethren, about taking promissory oaths; but if you have lawfully taken them, be equally careful about their fulfilment.

Obligatory promises made to God Himself are of further and still higher sacredness. They concern some greater good, are direct worship of the Creator, and are called vows. It is certainly most excellent to make them—provided, of course, that they be observed. “Vow ye, and pay to the Lord your God” (Ps. lxxv), sings holy David; and his wise son adds: “It is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised” (Eccl. v, 4). God is not alone invoked in a vow, but is also asked to accept an offering; the withdrawal or canceling of that consecrated oblation—without His permission or the permission of those who hold His place—is sacrilegious affront and mockery. Hence have all religious-minded people everywhere entertained fear and abhorrence of the violation of vows. Hence, too, though great the merit of such personal offerings, they are not usually to be made without safeguards and solemnities proportioned to their consequence, not, especially, without the direction and authorization of those who have charge of our souls.

III. The third and best exercise of the hallowing of God's name consists in loving it. If we truly love it, we shall not only reverence and respect it, but also proclaim and glorify it. The love of the divine name gives us a title to exultant and secure happiness both here and hereafter. “All they that love thy name shall glory in thee,” sings the Psalmist (Ps. v); and concerning the promised heavenly Sion he adds: “They that love his name shall dwell therein” (Ps. lxxviii). To love God's name ought to be easy and natural for those who remember that it represents Himself, who is our supreme good; and as often as we hear it we should hear also some such pleading as that of the inspired lawgiver with the undutiful people: “Is not he thy Father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee and created thee?” (Deut. xxxii, 6).

The confident strength it inspires is a winning reason for lov-

ing it; for if a vain use of it is pernicious, a believing use is inexpressibly efficacious and salutary. In both the Old Covenant and the New we have the mighty promise: "It shall come to pass that every one that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel ii, 32; Rom. x, 13). Hence in all dangers and struggles the loving invocation of the divine name insures divine help. God is pledged to the man who calls on Him: "I will protect him," He says, "because he hath known my name" (Ps. xc). And His servants kept Him up to His promise; for, on occasion, they cried out: "But thou, O Lord, art among us, and thy name is called upon by us: forsake us not" (Jer. xiv, 9). Certainly He did not forsake them: His hand was with them, their shield in peril, their sword in battle, as long as love of His name taught them to invoke it trustingly. See the youthful David going forth to answer the challenge of the blasphemous giant who had terrified armies. To the horrid threats and imprecations of the grim idolator the ruddy shepherd boy has but to answer: "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts"—and he conquers magnificently. So, too, my brethren, may we conquer and overcome every adversary, every opposition, if we know how to use the name of our God.

For us, Christians, there should be particular facility and delight in invoking the Lord, for we know Him more intimately than did even the best Hebrews, we know personally what to call Him. 'Twas of us He said: "Therefore, my people shall know my name in that day: for I myself that spoke, behold I am here" (Is. lii, 6). He is here, He is one of us, and Jesus is His name—His name in the message of the angel, in the declaration of the foster-father, in the heart of the immaculate mother, in the decree of the eternal Father, in His own choice, in the Holy Ghost by whom He was incarnate and by whom alone we can say—the Lord Jesus! How glorious to have that name in our possession! But how pitiful not to use it!—or to abuse it! Jesus, Lord! thy name is sweet; 'tis as oil poured out, a salutary balsam. 'Tis as honey and the honeycomb. With thy saints even we may repeat: nothing sweeter is sung, nothing more harmonious is heard, nothing more consoling is conceived, than Jesus, Son of God, Son of the Virgin!

Conclude, then, my brethren, to make your daily and hourly repetition of the great "*hallowed be thy name*" a reality and a rule of life. That opening petition of the *Our Father* may well be taken to express our whole duty to God and to Jesus Christ whom He

hath sent. It especially determines our proper use of holy names, most of all of that one name, the only one "given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv, 12). Fear of God's name we are to entertain, because of its sacred greatness, because of its divinity; but a believing, a trusting, a loving fear. Not for us the fear of the perfidious enemies of the Saviour of the world, who, having slain Him and then heard that He was risen from the dead, shuddered at the preaching of His name and wanted to prevent all mention of it. Our fear is to be one of loyal respect, of filial reverence, of fond affection. 'Tis to be a fear that our best naming of that name may be too unworthy, a fear that we may take from its glory and hinder its efficacy. We must aspire to fear in some such way as did the Virgin mother when, in her exultant *Magnificat*, she paused to say: "And holy is his name"; even to fear as did her Son, of whom it was prophesied that He should be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. That blessed fear leads on to love, is accompanied by it and submerged in it. If we have genuine fear of the Lord's name we shall infallibly have that *equal love* of it for which the Church constantly prays: *timorem pariter et amorem*; and then great must be our confidence that of each of us individually the Master we follow may repeat: "I will write upon him the name of my God," and that to us all collectively may be fulfilled His crowning promise: "They shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads" (Apoc. iii, 12; xxii, 4). In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

XI. SANCTIFYING THE SUNDAY; HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

BY THE VERY REV. ALEXANDER MACDONALD, D.D.

“Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.”

SYNOPSIS.—I. (a) *Three things we owe to God, loyalty, reverence, service: the last of the three enjoined by the third Commandment. In the old law the seventh day or Sabbath set apart by God Himself; rigor of its observance. (b) In the old law the third Commandment rested on the law of nature, but was not formally part of it. The Apostles, in virtue of the supreme power given them by Christ, inaugurate a new observance on a new day—the Lord’s Day. By the Church it has been instituted, and from the Church alone we are to learn the manner of its observance. St. Paul will have no one judge the Christian in respect of the Sabbath, which was but “a shadow of things to come.” (c) Holy days of obligation of ecclesiastical, not of apostolical, institution. Observance of same as that of Sunday.*

II. (a) *Precept of Sunday observance both positive and negative. As negative, it forbids servile labor. Reasons for the prohibition. Servile labor, labor of body and for body. Besides servile works, works of the law courts and of the market place forbidden. (b) Four causes exempt from obligation of rest: dispensation, custom, piety, necessity. Law of rest does not forbid liberal and ordinary works. (c) “Serve the Lord with gladness”—if on other days, much more on this “day that the Lord hath made.” Austerity and gloom befit it not, but joy in the Lord. Recreation, yes; dissipation, no. Grave scandal of misconduct on Sunday.*

III. (a) *Positive side of the precept. Man owes to God exterior as well as interior worship. Sacrifice the great act of exterior worship. The “clean oblation” foretold by the prophet, ever offered in the world-wide Church “from the rising of the sun to its setting.” (b) The Lord’s Day hallowed by the Lord’s sacrifice alone. Obligation of assisting at it the one great positive obligation. Binds on pain of mortal sin. Lawfully excused from hearing Mass by physical or moral inability to fulfil the precept. (c) We are to hear the whole Mass, with great outward respect, with great interior recollection and piety. Vocal prayer not prescribed.*

I. To God, the Creator and sovereign Lord, man owes three things: loyalty, reverence, service. Loyalty is enjoined by the First Commandment, reverence by the Second, service or worship by the Third. Busied with worldly work, with the service of the world, man is prone to neglect the service of God. Hence God has appointed a day of rest from worldly service, a day given over to His own service. And He bids us “remember” to keep this day holy,

as if in allusion to our proneness to forget the duty that we owe Him.

In the Old Law it was the last day of the week, the Sabbath or seventh day, that was holy to the Lord. "On the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger within thy gates" (Exod. xx). Such was the Commandment given to the children of Israel. It was given by God Himself, who set apart the seventh day or Sabbath as the day of rest, for that he had rested on that day from all the works which He had made. Rest from servile labor appears to have been the great obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, and it was rigorously enforced. All persons found working on the Sabbath, in violation of the Commandment, were stoned to death. In later times, the Pharisees added restrictions of their own, which were no part of the original institution. Thus, by the time of Our Lord, the observance of the Sabbath had become a burden too heavy to be borne.

The law of nature itself enjoins the worship of God, not only internal, with which the First Commandment is especially concerned, but also external, for which the Third Commandment was given. But neither the time nor the manner of divine worship is determined by the law of nature. Under the Mosaic dispensation God Himself determined both the time and the manner. Under the Gospel dispensation, He has left it to His Church to determine and prescribe both. The Third Commandment of the Decalogue, though divine, was not, like the other nine Commandments, formally as it stood, part and parcel of the law of nature. It was what is known as a positive divine precept, and, like many another positive divine precept given to the Jews, passed away with the Mosaic dispensation. It was not a transfer of its obligation to the first day of the week that was effected by the Apostles; it was the inauguration of a new observance on a new day—the Lord's Day. Hence St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, reckons the Jewish Sabbath among other ceremonial observances of the Jews which were "a shadow of things to come," and will have no man judge the Christian in respect of it. It was only natural that men who disowned the Lord's Church, and yet held to the Lord's Day, should fall back upon the Old Testament for both the sanction and the method of its observance. But our divine Saviour, who proclaimed Himself Lord

also of the Sabbath, has freed us from bondage to the law, and has willed that our day of rest, the day on which He rose from the dead, should be kept, not in gloomy servitude to a dead letter, but with the liberty of the children of God. "The observance of the Lord's Day," says St. Thomas, "succeeds the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept of the (Mosaic) law, but by the law of the Church and the custom of Christian people" (2 a, 2 ae, 9, 102, a. 5). Of course, this law of the Church, which received from Christ supreme power to bind and to loose, is as binding in conscience as was the Mosaic law, and though it may be dispensed from in particular cases, it can not be wholly set aside, as being founded upon and a determination of the law of nature itself.

Besides the Sabbath the Jews also kept other festivals which were of direct divine institution and on which servile work was forbidden. Notable among these was the day of first-fruits (Num. xxviii), the day of atonement (Num. xxix), and the passover or feast of unleavened bread (Levit. xxiii). So, too, under the New Law, we have our holy days of obligation, instituted by the Church with the same sanction and the same observance as the Sunday. These holy days are of ecclesiastical, not of apostolic, institution, and the number of them has greatly varied down through the ages.

II. The precept of Sunday observance, and the same applies also to holy days of obligation, is both positive and negative. It prescribes and it prohibits. I will speak first of it in its negative aspect. The Church forbids servile labor on Sundays and holy days of obligation. The main reason why she does so is that the faithful may be free to give themselves up to the service of God. Another reason that may be given is that men require rest from bodily labor, as well for the health of the body itself as for the improvement of the mind. "The rest from labor, however, is not to be understood as a mere giving way to idleness, much less must it be an occasion for spending money and for vicious indulgence, as many would have it be; but it should be rest from labor hallowed by religion" (Encyclical of Leo XIII on the Condition of Labor).

Servile labor corresponds pretty much to what is commonly known as manual labor. It is called servile, because in the early ages of the Church such work was for the most part performed by slaves (*servi*). It is such labor as exercises the body chiefly and is for the use of the body; for instance, the work done by farmers, artisans, tradesmen, and the like. The obligation of abstaining

from such labor binds under grave sin, in a grave matter. It extends from midnight to midnight. The obligation admits of light matter, which is generally estimated by the time employed in labor. To work for two and a half or three hours is accounted grave matter by all. Not only those who work themselves, but those also who make others work, or allow those under their charge to work, are guilty of sin. It matters not that the labor be gratuitous, or done out of mere charity but without necessity, or very light, as sewing or knitting; if it is servile, *i. e.*, bodily and especially for the body, it is forbidden.

Besides servile works two other classes of works are forbidden, which may be described as works (1) of the law-courts, and (2) of the market-place. The former include all law proceedings, such as trying a case, summoning witnesses, hearing their testimony, pleading, etc.; among the latter are reckoned public buying and selling, traffic in open shops, business contracts of a formal kind, markets and fairs. The reason of the prohibition in the case of all such works is that they involve more or less of bodily labor, are of an altogether worldly character, and withdraw men from the worship of God, which is the great end of the precept.

Four causes are assigned which serve to exempt people from the obligation of abstaining from servile work, namely, dispensation, custom, piety, necessity. (1) The law of rest from servile labor has been made by the Church: therefore, she can dispense from it. The power of dispensing lies primarily with the Pope, but bishops can dispense in particular cases for a just cause, and even parish priests, by tacit delegation of the bishop or force of custom. (2) Custom interprets the law, and so long as a given custom is not condemned by ecclesiastical authority, it may be followed with a safe conscience. (3) Piety toward God or toward one's neighbor may exempt from the obligation. Hence it is lawful to do things that proximately appertain to the worship of God, such as decorating altars, blowing organs, etc., and to perform the corporal works of mercy, such as attending the sick and burying the dead. (4) Necessity, as the saying is, knows no law. Hence any work is allowed that either can not be put off at all or at any rate can not be put off without grave inconvenience. However, in this matter it is well to consult one's pastor, or at least some discreet person, lest necessity or grave inconvenience be assumed where none exists.

The law of rest does not prohibit (1) liberal and (2) ordinary

works. The latter are such as relate to daily necessities, and the care of the household; preparing food, sweeping rooms, looking after cattle, going on a journey—provided this last does not keep one from hearing Mass, or, in that event, is not begun on the Sunday or holy day. Liberal works are those that exercise the mind rather than the body, and tend directly to the cultivation of the mind: for instance, reading, writing, transcribing, drawing, teaching, playing on musical instruments, etc. Certain of these, such as writing or playing the organ, may exercise the body as much as or even more than knitting or sewing, for instance, but they are for the benefit of the mind rather than of the body, and so are not servile. The same is true of all forms of honest recreation, which even when they fatigue the body serve to unbend the mind, and so fit us the better to perform our duties to God and man.

“This is the day that the Lord hath made; let us exult and be glad therein.” It is in the spirit which these words breathe that the Church would have us observe the Lord’s Day. Austere demeanor befits it not; gloom has no place in it. If even when we fast, Our Lord bids us “be not like the hypocrites, sad,” how much rather when we keep the festival of His triumph over sin and death. At the same time our joy must be in the Lord. Not in sin, not in revelry, not in rioting, not in drunkenness, is any of His days to be spent (for all days are His), and least of all this day that He has made so peculiarly His own. Recreation, yes; dissipation, no. Drunkenness, or debauchery of any kind, is no worse in itself on Sunday than it is on Monday, but surely the scandal of it is. And woe to the Catholic through whom the scandal cometh!

III. And now let us consider the positive side of the precept. Rest from servile labor is enjoined that we may have leisure to worship God. True worship has its seat in the heart, but must show itself outwardly, for man is not a bodiless spirit. Moreover, the worship of God that is enjoined on the Lord’s Day is public worship, and this can not be other than external and sensible. Now the distinctive act of external worship is sacrifice. From the cradle of the race God was worshiped by sacrifice, and under the Mosaic dispensation the ritual of sacrifice was given directly by God Himself. The sacrifices of the Old Law, however, were typical, and had no value of their own apart from the one great and eternal sacrifice which they shadowed forth. “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, by the

self-same sacrifices which (the Jewish priests) offer continually every year can never make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. x, 1). And so God announced by the mouth of the prophet Malachy that in every place, among the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun even to its going down, there should be offered to His name a clean oblation. This "clean oblation" is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass begun in the Last Supper, finished on Calvary, continued on the altars of the world-wide Church for evermore. Here alone we have the one perfect act of divine worship, which the one High Priest, Christ Jesus, still offers to the eternal Father by the ministry of men.

The Church enjoins upon all the faithful who have come to the use of reason to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation, and this on pain of mortal sin. To miss Mass through one's own fault on Sunday or on a holy day of obligation, even if one should spend the whole day in prayer and other good works, is to sin grievously against the law of God and His Church. To assist at Mass devoutly, even if one should perform no other act of worship in the course of the day, is to fulfil, in every essential respect, one's duty to God, as defined by His Church. The Lord's Day is hallowed by the Lord's sacrifice alone. This does not mean that we are doing all that the Church desires and expects of us if we simply hear Mass, and devote the remainder of the day to rest and recreation, however innocent and lawful. It only means that we do all that she requires and exacts of us on pain of sin. For the rest the Church leaves us free, but takes it for granted that we shall use our freedom in a way that befits Christians, since we are taught from our childhood that the one end for which God made us is to know, love and serve Him here on earth, and be happy with Him forever hereafter. "We exhort the faithful in the Lord," are the words of Pope Benedict XIV, "that they attend at the public prayers and divine praises, and hear the word of God, and that during the entire feast they perform as far as possible works of Christian charity and piety."

But we may be lawfully hindered from hearing Mass, in which case we are free from fault or sin. This happens as often as we are either physically or morally unable to go to Mass. By reason of physical inability the sick are excused, as are also those on a voyage, those in prison, and those who live in a place where there is no church or priest. Moral inability means inability to hear

Mass without grave inconvenience. In other words, there must be a grave reason for staying away from Mass. Such is accounted, for instance, feeble physical condition; attendance at the bed of the sick, either as physician or nurse; great distance from the church for the old or infirm, etc.

We are likewise obliged to assist at the entire Mass, and though we may fulfil the precept of the Church by our presence from the Creed to the Communion inclusively, yet it can not be denied that there is an evident lack of appreciation of, and of proper respect for, the Holy Sacrifice shown by those who Sunday after Sunday come in late or leave before the proper time to the grave disedification of all present. Nor can they be said to be excused from sin who merely attend in body, but who never give one thought to God nor to the needs of their soul, who in fact are too negligent to make even the sign of the Cross, who come and go as the merest matter of routine. They are certainly wanting in the respect due to God their Creator and to Christ their Redeemer.

Dear brethren, there is no better practise that I can recommend to you this morning than to consider frequently during the week the nature and the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is an unbloody Sacrifice of Calvary. If that thought takes hold of you nothing that this world has to give you would keep you away from Mass on Sunday; you would be willing, as did the Martyrs of old, to sacrifice all, even life, in gratitude to the God who has done and is doing so much for you.

XII. THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS AND TO SUPERIORS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

"Honor thy father and thy mother."—Exod. xx, 18.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.* The foundation of the duties of children is the position which parents and superiors hold as instruments in the hand of God. Duties to parents analogous to duties to God. By reason of origin we owe them love. By reason of dignity we owe them reverence. By reason of governmental authority we owe them obedience.

I. Love. Instinctive in animal creation. In man dignified by reason and by grace. Sanctioned by natural and by divine law. Must be internal as well as external. The external derives its richest fruits from internal.

II. Reverence. Nature of filial as distinct from social or servile reverence. Founded in inward acknowledgment of parents' superiority. Not abrogated by unworthy parents. The mutual reaction of outward and inward reverence. Sanctioned by natural and divine law.

III. Obedience. Relation of family to community and state. Law needful in all departments. Natural and divine sanctions. Extension of parental authority. Limits of parental authority: (a) in the matter of sin; (b) in the choice of state of life. Claims of parents and claims of God can not clash.

IV. Duties to spiritual pastors.

V. Duties to temporal masters.

Conclusion.—Duties of children to parents a good preparation for fulfilling duties of citizenship and religion. Example of Blessed Thomas More.

The reason of man's absolute subjection to God is the fact that God has created man and has endowed him with everything that he possesses. This relationship between Creator and creature, together with all its beautiful implications of redemption, preservation, providence and so forth is visualized for us in the invocation of the prayer of Christ: "Our Father who art in heaven." The most perfect analogy or shadow which we have of this divine relationship is the relationship between a human father and his child. Our parents were the instruments in the hands of God by which we were brought into being, nursed through childhood, and educated into manhood. By reason of this origin, therefore, we have certain special duties to our earthly parents analogous to our duties to our heavenly Parent. This practise of these duties toward

earthly parents is known as the virtue of dutifulness, just as the practise of the corresponding duties toward God is known as the virtue of religion. Duties toward parents are, of course, of less importance than duties toward God, but on the other hand they are of more importance than duties toward one's neighbor. It is the title under which rights are held that gives the relative importance to the corresponding duties. God's rights come before a parent's rights because we owe to Him more than to a parent. Nay, we owe to Him the very fact that we have parents, for God was under no obligation to create our ancestors in the first instance. A parent's rights come before a neighbor's rights, because our parents gave us our very life, the dearest of all our possessions. Under this title, then, our parents have a right to our love, reverence and obedience. Just as God is our Creator and demands our love, so our parents are our progenitors and demand our love. Just as God is infinitely higher than men in dignity and so requires a supreme reverence, so parents are relatively higher than their children in dignity and require a relative reverence. Just as God is supreme ruler of the world and has a right to enact an absolute obedience, so the parents are the rulers of the family, and thus, within the sphere of things pertaining to the family, have a right to exact obedience from the children.

The love due to parents is one of the primary instincts of our nature. The sensible affection of the parent for the offspring, and of the offspring for the parent, is evident through the whole of animal creation. Some animals will suffer death rather than give up or neglect their young. If, therefore, this is so in the lower creation, how much more ought it to be true in man, who is raised so much higher and is endowed with a free and intelligent will by which to enjoy a more perfect love and affection. By his reason he is able to reflect on the infinite difference between being nothing and being something. He is able to know, and in some imperfect way to realize, what cares and responsibilities his parents have undertaken in bringing him into the world and tending him until he should come to an age when he can look after himself. Reflecting on these things the grave obligation, moreover an honorable and beautiful obligation, is at once apparent of making a willing offering to his parents of a great love. Ecclesiasticus, therefore, preaches both the natural and the divine law when he says: "Honor thy father and forget not the groanings of thy mother: Remember that

thou hadst not been born but through them: and make a return to them as they have done for thee." Likewise the holy Tobias when, being about to die, he spoke thus to his son: "When God shall take my soul thou shalt bury my body: and thou shalt honor thy mother all the days of her life: For thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb. And when she shall have ended the time of her life, bury her by me." Indeed God Himself sanctioned this Commandment with a special promise of material prosperity, and caused it to be known ever afterward as the commandment of promise. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thou mayst be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

We may see more clearly now what kind of love that of children to parents must be. It must not be one merely of external deference. It must be that heartfelt love which is human affection apprehended by the reason, controlled and directed by the will, raised and spiritualized by grace. Thus cultivated it will of necessity bring forth fruits in external life and conduct. There will be no more black looks or harsh words; no more unseemly quarrels and aggravations; no more complaints of parents neglected in sickness and old age. "Of what an evil fame is he that forsaketh his father: and he is cursed of God that angereth his mother." Nay, more. If once the real motive of filial love be grasped and the consequent heartfelt affection be excited, there will be no need of forced outward deference, which even in times of annoyance and dissatisfaction must be observed. All will flow naturally, or rather supernaturally; for with a person whose heart is right, all his actions, however natural, easy and pleasant they are, are spiritualized and clothed with divine charity.

The superiority of parents involves reverence on the part of children. It is not the reverence due from an equal to an equal, nor yet is it that of a slave to a master. But it is that special kind of affectionate regard which is known as filial reverence. It is begotten only by a certain attitude of mind. It can not exist merely as an external show. It can not exist from any purely philosophical motive. Unless there is an inward acknowledgment to one's self of the parent's superiority under God, there can not be true filial reverence. This duty, therefore, must have its foundation laid in the heart and mind. The habit of mind must be cultivated of regarding parents as representative in some way of the superiority

of God. The reverential fear of God is the root motive of filial reverence of parents. "He that feareth the Lord honoreth his parents and will serve them as his masters that brought him into the world." From the inward habit of mind and affection there will flow forth the external reverence of words and deeds.

It may happen, it often does happen, that a parent does things which tend to disturb that inward reverence. There are duties on the part of parents toward their children as well as duties on the part of children toward their parents. That, however, is a matter for special treatment in its proper place. Here we are concerned with the duties of children, and particularly with the duty of reverence on occasions when the parent has failed in his or her duty. The child is never justified in offering to a parent irreverence. To attempt to justify such conduct on the grounds that the parent has forfeited the reverence due to him is to have missed the chief meaning of reverence to parents. We do not owe them this reverence simply because they are good and kind and affectionate. Doubtless those qualities do impose an extra claim on us. But the foundation reason of our reverence is the bare fact that they are our parents and that under God they are our superiors. And no amount of subsequent neglect of duty on their part can undo this fact. Of course our inward feelings are not always under our control. Still in such circumstances we can and ought to maintain at least an outward reverence of word and deed. Then this outward behavior will react on the inward soul and will tend to fasten the due inward reverence. The exercise of control over our outward actions will strengthen our inward patience, and the effect of this inward patience will make itself felt in the parent and thus be the means perhaps of making him reflect on his duty. "Honor thy father in work and word and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end."

We come next to the question of obedience. The obedience of children toward parents has its reason in the idea of family government. The family is the foundation of the community and of the state. If, therefore, men are bound to obey the laws of the country in which they live, and if they are bound to observe the by-laws of their community, much more are they bound to attend to the commands of parents in all matters pertaining to the well-being of the household. The very existence of a state is dependent on the due observance of its laws. So also is the very existence of family life

dependent on the due respect for parental authority. Anarchy in the family tends to anarchy in the community and anarchy in the state. Filial obedience, therefore, is an exigency of the law of nature.

It is an exigency also of the divine law. "Children," says St. Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just." Nay, the parents have a sanction given them to enforce obedience if need be. They must avoid arbitrary and harsh treatment, yet at the same time they must be firm in maintaining their rights and insisting on parental authority. "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." Therefore it is that St. Paul says again: "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord."

Perhaps, however, the children may ask: "Is there no limit to this parental authority? Surely the time must come when I must think and act for myself!" Yes, there are limits which it is well to know. But first let us be clear as to the extent before we speak about the limits. First, it is manifest that parents have supreme authority in the management of the household. The children have not the right to choose the kind of house, the quality of the food, the hours of the meals. Secondly, the parents have charge of the children's manners and education, and therefore they have the right and duty of demanding obedience in behavior about the house. Thirdly, they have the right and the duty of looking after the spiritual welfare of the children. Consequently, they are entitled to say who are fitting companions, what are permissible amusements, whether it is good to go to this dance or to that theater. Further, on account of this spiritual oversight they have a right to warn the children when the time draws near for the Sacraments or when there is any other religious duty to be performed. Again, it is the right and duty of the parents to see to the proper education of their children in fitting them for the battle of life in temporal matters. Consequently there is a corresponding duty on the part of the children of corresponding with the means provided, of careful attendance at the school chosen, of availing themselves of all the opportunities for the improvement of mind and body which a thoughtful parent has afforded.

Now we may consider the limits of parental authority. First let us recall the root principle of this authority: the parents, in the exercise of it, are only supposed to be carrying out the work of

God. If, therefore, any of their commandments are manifestly contrary to the law of God, then the parents have gone beyond the limits of their jurisdiction. In such cases it is not only lawful but of obligation to lay aside the command of the parent. Such a course of action is not disobedience, but rather obedience to a higher law. But notice that this is only allowable when the thing commanded is *manifestly* against the law of God. If there is any doubt the presumption is always in favor of the parent; for a wayward child might easily persuade itself that it was following out God's will, while it was in reality only following out its own perverse will. Conscience certainly is supreme, but there is need to guard against a false conscience, and the only practical rule is to obey the parent in case of doubt.

Among the several kinds of cases in which the rights of God, the rights of parents and the rights of children seem to clash, there are two which are constantly arising and concerning which the Church has made definite arrangements. The question concerns the choice of a state of life. Is the child bound to obey its parents in choosing whether to get married or to become a priest or a religious?

We are here dealing with what is called a vocation. Now a vocation is a call from God. It is known by certain signs which are recognized by the Church and with which spiritual directors are well acquainted. If, therefore, those signs are present, if the vocation is sufficiently manifest, then clearly the child is perfectly justified in obeying the call of God and in setting aside the command of the parent who interferes with the call of God. And the principle works both ways. If the child is called to any given state of life, then it is wrong for the parent to interfere with that call. If, on the other hand, the child is not called to a given state, then it is wrong for the parent to urge the child, either directly or indirectly, to enter that state. Whether the case be one of entering upon matrimony, or the priesthood, or religion, God's call goes before the wishes of a parent. To ignore the wishes of parents in such a matter is no dishonor to them. Our Lord indeed rebuked the Pharisees, because under the pretense of honoring religion they taught men to withdraw the honor due to parents. The virtues by which God is honored and by which parents are honored are quite distinct from each other, but they are not at variance. Each virtue is limited by circumstances. Virtue carried beyond this limit is no longer a virtue but a vice. Thus the virtue of dutifulness to

parents is limited by the virtue of religion, or the worship of God. It can be no honor, therefore, to a parent to render him obedience when obedience to God demands some contrary action. Thus, whenever it comes to a choice between the service of man and the service of God, the service of God must prevail. Hence those plain words of Christ: "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." These words apply more particularly to the priestly and religious states, though there is an equally strong sanction as regards the matrimonial state. Christ Himself said: "Have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

On the other hand, there are circumstances when the claims of the parents would seem to prevail. It is not so in reality, for in these circumstances the call of God is not manifest. It is when the parents are so very poor that they can not live without the support of their children. God does not wish children to leave their parents in such plight under the pretense of leading a higher life. The highest life in such circumstances is to stay at home and take care of the parent who may be poor, sick or aged. There are four chief signs of a religious vocation, namely: constant desire; fitness for the order as to health, ability and character; acceptance by the order; the absence of any obligation of supporting parents in need. If, therefore, the candidate for religious life found that in order to enter religion he must leave his parent in destitution, that would be a clear sign that he had no vocation. That one fact would mark the limits of the virtue of religion. God could not possibly be honored by the entrance of one into religion under such circumstances. To act thus would be to turn the virtue of religion into a vice. Hence the duty to parents and the duty to God can not clash, for the limits of the one is outside the limits of the other. If in any given case they seem to clash, if a child wishes to marry, or to become a nun or a priest or a monk, contrary to the wishes of its parents, then the practical thing to do is to consult one's spiritual director. He is trained in the theology of the subject, he knows something of human nature, he knows the disasters that are in store either for forcing a vocation where there is none or for destroying a vocation where there is one. He knows also

the blessings that are in store for the true vocation faithfully followed.

By virtue of this division of labor it comes about that in addition to the love, reverence and obedience which children owe to their parents, there is also a love, reverence and obedience due to spiritual superiors. The priest is God's servant through whose ministry God's graces are conveyed to the soul. He is our spiritual father, and therefore in all matters spiritual is entitled to the obedience of the spiritual children committed to his care. And by the same title of spiritual fatherhood he has also a claim on their reverence and their love.

Sometimes it is necessary for both parents and pastors to get others to help them in their work of temporal and spiritual education. This help is represented in modern times by a vast system of scholastic and collegiate institutions. The schoolmaster, the schoolmistress, the professor, the master of the apprentice, all these, too, have in their own measure a claim on the love, reverence and obedience of the children committed to their care. The teacher stands in place of the parent or pastor. It is his duty to recognize in himself an instrument in the hand of God for the education and improvement of those committed to his care. On this account, therefore, he is entitled to his share of love, reverence and obedience. True, the love can not equal the love of a parent. Still, in proportion as the schoolmaster takes upon himself the responsibility of training a child, he may lawfully expect from the child corresponding duties. The principle involved is the same. The teacher is doing the work of God. The child, therefore, in honoring the teacher thereby acknowledges its submission to God; and in doing so it does honor to itself, for it makes profession of its right place in the order of the world.

In these days there is a strong tendency among men to exaggerate their rights and to undervalue the rights of their superiors. In the family and in the state and in religion there is a strong force of opposition to law. It is well, then, for children to realize early the dignity of dutifulness to parents, spiritual pastors and temporal masters. From a merely natural point of view such dutifulness can only lead to the good of the children. But from a supernatural point of view the thought is noble in the highest degree. We see that in serving our parents and those in authority for the sake of God, we are serving our own best interests; for we

are thereby doing our best to place ourselves in that adjustment of the universe which God has ordained as the most perfect.

The saints have ever been eminent in this virtue. Let us take the Blessed Thomas More as a glorious example. Dutifulness toward his parents was one of the most beautiful traits of his life. From his earliest years he showed the tenderest affection for them. Then, when in later life he came to occupy the high post of Lord Chancellor, the fondness and reverence for his parents increased rather than diminished. And the story is told of him how, when his father held a position in one of the lower courts, he used to be seen every morning to go and kneel and ask for the old man's blessing.

The law is clear then and so it remains for children to fulfil the commandment and to look forward confidently to the reward which will surely come to them in this life and in the next. For God has promised and He is faithful.

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XIII. THE DUTIES OF PARENTS, SUPERIORS,
OFFICIALS

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, A.M.

"Give ear you that rule the people, and that please yourselves in multitudes of nations; for power is given you by the Lord and strength by the Most High, who will examine your works and search out your thoughts."—Wis. vi, 3 and 4.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction. The fourth Commandment in general. Its direct and explicit bearing on the duties of children toward their natural parents and all superiors. Its consequent indirect bearing on the correlative duties of parents toward their children and of all superiors toward their inferiors.

Exposition.—I. The duties of parents toward their children, founded indirectly on the words of the divine precept, embracing the general duties of man toward his neighbor, as the first and only affirmative precept of the second table of the Decalogue. The same founded on the natural love of parents for their offspring, implying benevolence in extending to them all the same natural affection and tender solicitude for their welfare. The place held by the father as head of the family. The mother—her place in the family. The beautiful example of St. Monica. Reflection on the prodigal son, on Tobias—his beautiful example. The obligation of parents as regards this life. Sustentation and education of their children.

II. The duties of superiors toward their inferiors. This authority is from God—they are His deputies. This power is but a reflection of His. Their authority comes from Him, as that of an ambassador from his royal master. Holy Scriptures quoted to bear out arguments. Masters in relation to their servants. They are equals in the sight of God. They are also equals on the plane of nature. Hence masters should be kind and considerate toward their servants.

Conclusion.—An appeal to parents and all superiors to use aright the authority with which God invests them.

The whole law of God, given amidst the thunders, and smoke, and terrific majesty of His presence, on Mount Sinai, is based on the twofold precept of charity—fidelity to God and neighborly love. This Jesus Christ, the eternal Lawgiver, testifies to when He says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first of the commandments. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii, 37-39). The same teaching, touching the basic principle of the law, is found in the Mosaic dispensation: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one

Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength" (Deut. vi, 4, 5), and "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself. I am the Lord" (Lev. xix, 18).

Thus in the divine Code, which is an epitome of all that we owe in the moral relation, are clearly defined our special duties toward God and toward our neighbor. And, as a mighty earthly monarch, who issues a decree and heads it by his own name and high titles to inspire all with a wholesome fear of transgressing its commands, God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, prefaced His divine decree touching the duty of man toward Him, with His own name and almighty title: "I am the Lord thy God."

It is highly befitting, then, that the second table of the same divine Code which places before man his special duties toward his neighbor, should begin with the injunction: "Honor thy father and thy mother." For they, after God, have the first claim, the first natural right to our love and fidelity; as with them is the starting point of all society.

The direct and explicit bearing of this Commandment is the sum of the duties of children toward their parents and of all inferiors toward their superiors. But indirectly, and secondarily, and by inference, it embraces the duties of parents toward their children, and of all superiors toward their inferiors. To treat of the latter is the object of this discourse.

When the eternal Lawgiver, in the most solemn and public manner, gave command to children to show respect, love and obedience to their parents, it implied a correlative duty on the part of parents to bring up their children in the way in which they should go. And if fearful maledictions fall on those children who disregard the divine command to honor their parents, and be submissive to them, as befell Cham, who mocked his father and was cursed by him so that he and his descendants were outcasts, more fearful still must the hand of God fall on parents who, by their sinful lives, are the occasion of the spiritual ruin of their children. If, by the mouth of the prophet Ezechiel, He pronounces the thunders of His wrath on such as being in authority neglect to correct those committed to their care, what must be the vigor of His judgment against those who themselves are the cause of the spiritual ruin of their children or of persons over whom they have charge. "If when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die, thou

declare it not to him, nor speak to him that he may be corrected from his wicked way, and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at thy hand" (Ezech. iii, 18).

When Cain, the first murderer, purpled his hands in the blood of his brother, and God called him to account for the terrible deed, the guilty man would fain conceal his crime; but high heaven declared his guilt, for the blood of the innocent cries for vengeance against him (Gen. iv, 10). But as heaven is high above earth and eternity transcends the things of time, so is the soul, created to the image of the Eternal, more precious than our earthly lives; hence to ruin it by mortal sin is a greater offense against God than the shedding of human blood. How much louder, then, must ruined souls cry to heaven against parents who by their scandalous lives cause their spiritual death than did the soul of innocent Abel declare against his murderer?

Parents are bound by the natural law, deeply engraven on the heart of man, to love their children; and this love implies benevolence in extending to them all the same natural affection, and then bringing in the family circle that heavenly peace and harmony which are begotten of the love of parents for their children without distinction, and of the mutual love of children for one another. Jacob loved Joseph above all his other sons, and such predilection shown to him by their father excited the jealousy of his other brothers and led to consequences so sad and painful that history can scarcely furnish a parallel (Gen. xxxvii, 3, etc.).

The father as the head of a family should govern it with a well-ordered affection for all his children, providing for them, first, spiritual education that they may be able to correspond with the grace of God to attain that beautiful and blessed end destined for them by the Creator—the eternal happiness of heaven. That is the first duty of the Christian parent; beautiful indeed and worthy of the imitation of all fathers is the example given by the holy Tobias in instructing his son in godliness: "All the days of your life have God in your mind; and take heed that you never consent to sin nor transgress the Commandments of the Lord our God. Give alms out of thy substances, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee. According to thy ability be merciful. If thou have much give abundantly; if thou have

little take care even so to bestow willingly a little, . . . never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning. If any man hath done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire, and let not the wages of thy hired servants stay with thee at all. See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another" (Tob. iv).

And if great be the responsibility of the father as head of the family, greater still, if possible, is the responsibility of the mother as his coadjutor. With her begins the life of the child; and the first grave duty that devolves upon her is to safeguard the life and natural perfection of her offspring—a duty rendered more grave, because upon it depends also the spiritual life of the child. The father is indeed head of the family, but the mother's care and love seem to be more far-reaching; so much so, that God, speaking by the mouth of Isaias of His eternal love for His Church, referred to it under the image of a mother's love for her children (Isa. xlix, 15). Hence the Abbot Rupert, in his reflection on the pathetic case of the prodigal son, concludes that, had that wayward young man a mother living, he would never had gone away from his father's house, or, at least, he would return with greater confidence of being pardoned. What can be more beautiful than the example given by the holy Monica, mother of the great St. Augustine.

With a pagan father, and surrounded by corrupt companions, and himself filled with vanity and conceit equaled only by his extraordinary gifts of intellect, he became a prey to his own passions and fell deeper and deeper into vice. But a mother in her tender solicitude was watching over him. The saintly Monica wept and prayed and admonished that her erring son should wake up to a sense of the deplorable state of his soul. In after years the saint himself, with deepest humility and gratitude, says of such admonitions to him: "It seemed to me but the admonitions of a woman, which I was ashamed to obey; but, O God! they were thy admonitions and I knew it not. By her thou didst speak to me and in her I despised thee." Through the prayers and tears and unceasing care of this model of Christian mothers, Augustine, the vain and worldly young man, puffed up by pride in his own admirable gifts of mind, became the model of penitence, the great doctor of the Church and its most illustrious champion.

There is on the part of parents an obligation so grave to watch

over their children that the Apostle declares those guilty of neglect of their sacred duty to be worse than infidels: "If any man have not care of his own and especially of his house he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. v, 8). The infidel, untaught in the law of God, does by the light of reason and the law of nature imprinted on his heart, what the Christian, grounded in faith, often neglects to do. He, true to the instincts of nature, makes provision for his own; he provides what is necessary for the support of his children who received life from him. The evangelist has this instinct of nature in view when he says: "What man is there among you of whom, if his son ask bread will reach him a stone? or if he ask a fish will reach him a serpent?" (Matt. viii, 9, 10). By these words the evangelist would have us understand that nature, always true to itself, would prompt a father to relieve the hunger of his child, even apart from his sacred duty to do so founded on the law of charity. Hence parents who neglect to provide for their children are deaf even to the law of nature written on the fleshy tablets of the heart. So sacred is the duty of parents to watch over their children that our blessed Lord compares it with the office of the angels: "See that you despise not one of those little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my father who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 10).

All those in authority, superiors, officials, masters, are bound by the same commandment to safeguard, according to their office, the lives and interests of those committed to their care. The words of wisdom given in the text warn them of the strict account to which they will be called by the Eternal Judge: "Give ear you that rule the people and that please yourselves in multitudes of nations; for power is given you by the Lord and strength by the Most High, who will examine your words and search out your thoughts, . . . for a most severe judgment will be for them that bear rule. . . . for God will not respect any man's person; neither will he stand in awe of any one's greatness; for he hath made the little and the great, and he hath equally care of all" (Wis. vi, 3, etc.).

All authority comes from God; hence those that rule others should remember that they are to use their authority according to the command of Him who gave them the right to rule. Their authority is but the reflection of the power of God. His divine law should, therefore, be their guide. They have no power inherent in themselves; they are not, therefore, to use their au-

thority arbitrarily. If a prince should send an ambassador with plenipotentiary powers to settle an international question, such an ambassador would have to conform himself to the instructions of his royal master. Should he act otherwise he would abuse the high privilege conferred upon him, and he would be summarily dismissed in disgrace from the royal favor.

But what are all in authority but deputies of God, the Eternal King, from whom is all power. St. Paul in his beautiful inspired words in the epistle to the Romans, after admonishing "every soul to be subject to high powers," says: "There is no power but from God and those that are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, . . . for he is the minister of God to thee for good." Those, therefore, who wield authority do it as the representatives of God, and they are responsible to Him for the manner in which they deal with their inferiors.

Rulers must govern with justice and impartiality, for "there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii, 11; II Par. xix, 7). They must avoid self-interest, and not follow the example of the unjust Pilate, who, notwithstanding that he declared Christ innocent of all the charges which the Jews brought against Him—for he said: "I find no cause in this man," nevertheless condemned Him to a cruel and ignominious death. The unhappy Pilate gave such an unjust sentence to gain the favor of those who accused the Innocent, for he feared that they would accuse him to the emperor of not punishing one whom they declared to be the enemy of Cæsar. Yet the judgment of God fell upon him by the very thing which he dreaded. He was later accused to the emperor and banished from his dominions—the just retribution of heaven on one who so grossly abused the power with which God invested him. Those in authority are in a special manner to give good example; for like the city seated on a mountain that can not be hidden (Matt. v, 14), in virtue of their office they occupy a position so conspicuous that their lives are always mirrored before men.

Masters should treat their servants with kindness. In the words of the Apostle, they should do to them "that which is just and equal, knowing that they have also a master in heaven" (Col. iv, 1). They are equals before God, "for with him there is no respect of persons." Therefore, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, "If thou

have a faithful servant let him be to thee as thy own soul; treat him as a brother; because in the blood of thy soul thou hast begotten him" (Eccl. xxxiii, 31). Not only are masters and servants equal before God, but also in the plane of nature. This the great Shakespeare had in view when he put these words in the mouth of Hamlet, touching Cæsar the conqueror of nations:

Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away,
Oh, that this earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw.

And the immortal Horace says that death brings the scepter to the level of the spade. Hence on the plane of nature the master is not above the servant. The same divine fiat called them out of their kindred clay; the same image of the Almighty reflects in them both. The accidents of birth, or of fortune, do not give a claim to the master to lord it over the servant. Both have their rights, the one as superior, the other as subject; and both are bound by the same divine command to respect those rights.

In view of these considerations masters should be kind and considerate to their servants. They should treat them as fellow-beings and brothers in Jesus Christ, and thus conform with the words of Ecclesiasticus: "Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying those of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee" (Eccles. iv, 35). They should be punctual in paying them their just hire, as the Apostle warns them: "Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (Jas. v, 4).

Masters assume the duties of parents with regard to the servants. Hence their duty is to watch over them and instruct them in godliness, that they may prove to be good and useful members of the commonwealth, and thus, by their fidelity to their worldly rulers, may be worthy to be faithful servants of Him whose rewards are infinitely rich, and will endure for all eternity.

XIV. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"A young man according to his way. Even when he is old he will not depart from it."—Prov. xxii, 6.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The period of childhood contains the future life of the man. First impressions the strongest. Necessity of the early implanting of religion and morality.*

II. *Intellect and the moral faculties. The latter of higher kind than scientific knowledge. Neglected in modern secular education. Education does not insure goodness.*

III. *Miserable results of intelligence without virtue. Hardly a greater blessing than a good and thorough education, and this is one of the objects of the Catholic Church.*

I. As the acorn contains the oak, so does the thoughtless, careless period of childhood contain in a manner the future life of the man. Our character and the main course of our life are determined by our own will acting upon external circumstances. All through life our circumstances act upon our character, but those which impress us most deeply and last the longest in their effects are those which belong to our earliest youth. In childhood the foundation is laid on which the structure of our life is raised, whether it be a good and divine life, or criminal and irreligious, a life of dignity and beneficence, or one that is a curse to its owner and to others. Habits and dispositions are run into a certain mold even before the age of reason, and they retain their first form more or less through life. First impressions are the strongest; they take possession of the mind while it is yet a blank and ready to receive the first that offer; they are assimilated and become a second nature. Later impressions find the ground already occupied; it is only with difficulty that they displace the earlier ones; they enter more slowly and do not take root so deeply. It is a hard matter to begin learning afresh when life is advancing; unlearning is harder still. The apprenticeship to the work of life must begin as soon as possible; those who begin a little late will never acquire the same facility as those who have begun at first, nor will they be able to compete with them. If the earliest impressions on a child's mind

are religious and honorable, they will never be entirely effaced; even though forgotten, they will have an insensible influence, and some time or other they will revive. If religion and morality have not entered into the first steps of education, they will never become as second nature; at the best they will be an addition to the original stock; even if they become vigorous they will still be a kind of foreign growth. The Christian education of children is a matter of supreme importance, it can not begin too early, it requires to be carried out with the greatest possible efficiency.

The proper education of a human being is the training of him as a whole, the development of all his faculties, the preparation of him for all his duties, the making of him, as nearly as possible, a perfect man. A disproportioned development of any one part is in itself an imperfection, and it generally involves further imperfections in the arrested development of other parts. Trees may be grown with a special view either to their wood, or their foliage, or their fruit, and if there is to be more of the one there must be less of the others. Animals may be bred for swiftness, or strength, or beauty, or for their fleece, or as food; but the more completely that object is attained the less perfect will they be all round. A man may cultivate his muscles and his endurance to an unusual extent, but he will pay for it with his lungs or his nerves, or even with his life. The undue pampering of the body leads to mental and moral debility. As workers become more efficient in their own minute division of labor they grow more thoroughly helpless for every other purpose. This sort of thing is very well in industrial life, where the need is not for the best all-round man, but for one who can do one small thing only and do it well. But in the moral and social life there is no division of labor. We do not want that one set of men should be intelligent, and another set moral, and another set healthy. It will not do that one man should be only industrious, and another only honest, and that a third should do nothing but tell the truth, and that others should be devout and religious exclusively. A one-sided cultivation is injurious to a man in the lower levels of his existence, but in his higher life it is fatal to his perfection. The untrained, ignorant man may be a blot on the world, but a half-educated man is likely to be a positive danger; and more especially if one great department of his faculties be left untrained, and that the one which regulates the due employment of all the others.

Education, as it is understood in most parts of the world at the

present, is by no means the complete training of the whole man that it ought to be. It recognizes only one set of human faculties, and develops those, disregarding in the first place the existence of other and more important faculties, and then dwarfing or starving them. The training it gives is one-sided, and disturbs the proportion which should exist between different parts of the man. The intellect is regarded as if it were the whole man, and it is trained with a view to one portion only of its functions, *viz.*, those which concern worldly knowledge, the acquirement of wealth, and the enjoyment of it. Modern education takes the mind, endeavors to strengthen it, sharpen it, and inform it, so as to get from it the largest practical results within the limits named. This is considered to be the end of education. But intellectual training is not an end desirable for its own sake, it is only a means to something better; it is only one instrument out of several others for making a man wholly perfect and good. Knowledge and cleverness are by no means the only equipment which man requires for the many works of life; they are by no means sufficient to make him happy, useful, noble and lovable. Yet from this kind of education the unchristian world expects the happiest results. It understands rightly that knowledge is a great power, but it forgets that an additional training is necessary to teach the proper uses of power; it forgets that the possession of power affords no assurance against the mischievous employment of it, and that literary and scientific training afford no sufficient guidance of men's actions. When education fails to realize their expectations they think it enough to impart a few more kinds of knowledge: they simply increase the quantity of a medicine that has proved ineffectual, instead of changing it for another.

II. 1. Man has another set of faculties besides these of the intellect. These are the moral faculties. Among them are such as justice, unselfishness, benevolence, honesty, self-restraint, forgiveness, patience, patriotism, chastity, temperance, courage. They are an altogether higher kind than scientific knowledge, clear-sightedness, acuteness. They are not concerned with material personal advancement, they are in some sense opposed to our immediate advantage; but they are a great deal more important for the general social welfare of mankind than any intellectual qualities by themselves. And these are precisely the things that are neglected in modern secular education.

Intellectual advancement is a duty that we owe to God and to society; in that consists a considerable part of the work imposed on mankind; it is one of the highest goods in our power; but, like all other things, it is liable to misuse, and may become an instrument of immense evil. A due proportion must be observed between all the constituent elements of human nature, and therefore moral cultivation should go hand in hand with the intellectual. If this be neglected, the most injurious consequences are to be feared. In God, who is the rule of human perfection, power and goodness are equal, for each is infinite. The extreme example of intellectual power without rectitude is Satan, the opposite of God. And this is the type to which that portion of the human race is approaching, which cultivates the powers of the mind to the utmost and suppresses the moral and religious sense. Secular education is a matter of immense importance, but moral education is more important still. If one of them could possibly be spared, if it came to a choice between the two, it would be far better to sacrifice intellectual than moral advantages. High principle is a much better thing than smartness. In these times and places which have been backward in knowledge, and wealth, and the conveniences of life, among simple, God-fearing populations, we know that men were able to lead easier, happier and more elevated lives than at present. They had fewer powers but more virtue. Their mental condition was imperfect, but their social state was better than ours, for their morals were better and crime was almost unknown. In our days we can see the effect of intelligence without morality. Power is increased enormously with the advance of education, but it is also abused enormously. It becomes a most dangerous weapon for the injury of society when the selfish impulses of its holder are not restrained by moral and religious law. It can be held only by the few, and unless it be used rightly it benefits them alone and does harm to all others. Education does not insure goodness. The most direct road to personal advantage is generally the road of dishonesty and violence; and there is nothing to keep a selfish man from following it but that moral training which is so completely neglected at this day. Education helps a man to secure the object of his desires, whatever it be. Moral training is required to prevent him from desiring an unworthy object, or seeking it by unlawful means. Secular education, however wonderful many of its results, is by itself but a doubtful good; it provides a most powerful instrument, which

may be turned either to good or bad purposes, but does not secure that it shall be used for the good. On the contrary, it leaves full liberty to the evil impulses of human nature, and enables men to follow them with more facility.

2. Man is not only a moral being, he is also religious. He has relations to God. He was made by Him and requires Him for his happiness and perfection. He has, therefore, another class of faculties, the spiritual ones, which have an object to accomplish; he has another set of duties which must be observed, if he is to fulfil his complete destiny; he has a class of aspirations and cravings that look beyond the things of this life. Man requires to be instructed in the knowledge of God, His nature, His perfections; to be led to think of Him frequently, to worship Him, to imitate Him; to be taught His law, its obligations, and its penalties. Not only with a view to the next life, but also for the better guidance of this one, religion is required. It not only trains the spiritual faculties, but it is necessary for the development of the moral sense and for the guidance of the mental and bodily powers. Without it a man runs the risk of being a burden to himself and a danger to others. So it is not only for the glory of God, not only for a man's own perfection and happiness, but it is for the worldly interests of society that he should be instructed in religion.

This is a subject that requires to be systematically taught. It does not come naturally, it can not be left to chance; it is not to be picked up casually from a conversation here, or a sermon there, or a book at another time, nor even from assisting once in the week at the services of the Church. If it be not included in the ordinary course of education it will never be thoroughly learned, and the child will pass through life and die a stranger to the grandest truths, the most ennobling teachings, the greatest of consolations and the most sacred duties.

A great deal of the education of the present day, while careless about the moral training of youth, is madly hostile to the cultivation of the religious faculties. Even where religion is not openly depreciated and insulted, it is contemptuously tolerated as a kind of impractical superfluity, and there is a very strong though unavowed influence running against it. Outside the influence of the Catholic Church there is very little education that is not seriously imperfect and injurious. Human nature is left untrained on its most important side; it becomes distorted, perverted, and it is likely to

generate so much the greater evils as its powers are more highly developed.

III. History affords many examples of the miserable results of intelligence without virtue. One of the intellectual giants of the world, a man of unsurpassed wisdom, whose philosophical writings are among our greatest treasures, whose abilities raised him to wealth, and the highest of dignities, and imperishable renown, was yet able to prove himself one of the basest of men. He was a self-seeker, a coward, a false friend, a monster of ingratitude, a perjured judge who sold his verdicts to the highest bidder, at once the admiration and the scorn of all mankind. In the Old Testament we read of Achitophel, whose "counsel which he gave in these days was as if a man should consult God" (II Kings xvi, 23). His counsel was wicked, although wise; he fell into disgrace and died by his own hand. Solomon, again, was the wisest of men, but when he forgot the law of God he fell to the lowest depths of lust and idolatry, and we know not if he repented and saved his soul. Who have been the greatest enemies of progress, and liberty, and the well-being of society? Not the ignorant and uncultivated, but those who had and those who now have all the powers that secular education can give. Cruel tyrants, reckless conquerors, profligate statesmen, swindling financiers, these pests of humanity are generally men endowed with knowledge and intelligence, and deficient only in moral and spiritual training.

The unreligious and unmoral education of the present day is already beginning to bear its fruits, disappointing the expectations of those who thought that book learning by itself was capable of extinguishing crime and reforming morals. Ignorance, it was said, was the mother of crime. That is true, indeed, in a sense, but not in the sense generally attached to those words. It was not the ignorance of secular subjects, but the ignorance of the moral and religious law that produced crime. If formerly less crime was found among educated men, that was due, not so much to the secular part of their education, as to the moral and religious training that was always given with the other. But now we find that modern education has not diminished crime, but changed its character. It has not subdued the vicious instincts in men, but has guided them more cunningly. Criminals are not less abundant, but the educational level has risen among them as elsewhere. Under the new system the character of children is deteriorating. We hear

of their greater unruliness, disobedience, self-sufficiency, insolence, and of the decline of those qualities which constituted the charm of youth, innocence, submissiveness, deference for authority, religiousness. In some countries we hear of an alarming increase of juvenile crime, and of a horror, formerly unknown, the suicide of children. In most well-educated countries there has been a general increase in crimes of violence and dishonesty. As education and refinement spread there is a growth of most brutal and inhuman crimes, such as the ill-treatment and torturing of children and organized infanticide. Those who live by their wits on the earnings of others have found new ways of doing so, less crude than burglary, forgery, and highway robbery, equally dishonest, but safe under the protection of the law, and honorable in the eyes of men. To the same general cause, the advancement of intelligence without moral restraints, we may assign the great social economical evils of the civilized world, the conflict of labor and capital, the unequal distribution of wealth, the growth of enormous fortunes and of most appalling and widespread misery, with its consequent crime and paganism, the dislocation of industry, class-hatred, international enmities. All this and much more is the offspring of the furious greed for wealth, no longer checked by Christian principle, armed with all the power of scientific education, and ruthless in pursuing its ends.

There is, among the many gifts of God, hardly any one more important, hardly any greater blessing, than that of a good and thorough education, embracing the body, the mind, the heart, the soul. To secure this has always been one of the great objects of the Catholic Church. Schools, colleges, universities, teaching orders of men and women have sprung up everywhere, around the altar and the pulpit, as soon as these have been erected. Learning has always gone hand in hand with holiness. And the aim of all this has been to promote not some low, temporary, material object, such as trade only, or the creation of wealth only, or pleasure only, but the aim of it all has been to promote the temporal and the eternal interests of men, to give them prosperity, happiness and peace, and chiefly the opportunity of leading an exalted Christian life and attaining to their final perfection in heaven. The object of many governments and many whole countries is to frustrate this object of the Catholic Church by destroying Christian education. So great is the hatred which Satan has inspired into the members of his

kingdom on earth against the Catholic Church that they are blind to all consequences, and are ready to imperil all the interests of the world in order to undermine the kingdom of truth and justice set up by Jesus Christ. They little reckon what they are doing. Without Christian education the Church, humanly speaking, would perish, and with her would perish all religion, for she is the sole leaven of goodness in the world; without religion there can be no morality; without the moral law there can be no social order, progress or freedom. To destroy the Church would be to destroy humanity. The Church of Jesus Christ is the heart not only of religion, but of civilization. It is impossible to still its beatings and wrench it from its place without destroying the whole body. If the enemies of Christianity should ever succeed in raising up a generation endowed with all the powers of acute intelligence, and emancipated, as they call it, from the law of God, they will find that they have raised up a force of more overwhelming destructiveness than the hordes of barbarians who, in their onset, swept away the ancient world.

The great danger of the present day is secular or anti-Christian education. Against it the Church is putting forth all her strength. In former ages the issues between Christ and Satan were fought out by Christians before the tribunals of persecutors, in the amphitheater, at the place of execution. At this day a similar struggle for existence is in progress, but the field of battle is now the school room. The militia of religion fight for Christ, no longer as solitaries in the desert of the Thebaid, no longer as contemplatives in mountain monasteries, nor crusaders against Mahomet, nor as martyrs at the rack or the stake, but as school teachers. The chief work of the religious orders varies with each successive age; in our day it is almost exclusively the education of youth. The struggle in which we are engaged, though less splendid than those of former times, is perhaps one of the most critical in the whole history of religion, and demands a spirit of courage and sacrifice not less than that which inspired the martyrs. The soldiers of the Church are equal, as always, to their high vocation; and their great numbers, their undaunted energy, their generous devotion, afford as good a promise as ever before, that, with the aid of God's almighty grace, they will add yet another victory to the records of the Church's glory.

XV. THOU SHALT NOT KILL

SUICIDE—REVENGE

BY THE REV. JAMES J. FOX, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Self-murder the most guilty form of murder; false and true estimates of suicide; suicide is a usurpation of the dominion of the Creator; and a special act of contempt toward the will of God; it is the greatest injustice we can perpetrate against ourselves, for it deprives us of our highest temporal good, and, in a special way, exposes us to the loss of our eternal welfare.*

II. *Revenge is the parent of sins against the Fifth Commandment, and of all sorts of unjust actions—all of which, when committed through motives of revenge, take on a deeper guilt because they are violations of the law of charity; teaching of Our Lord on love; the forgiveness of injuries, and the measure of God's mercy. Self-deception regarding this vice. Exhortation.*

I. The Fifth Commandment forbids all unjust destruction of, or injury to, human life; to kill a fellow-being, except by lawful authority, is to violate in the greatest manner the rights of God and the right of man—the rights of God, who alone is the Lord of life and death, who alone can impart life, and alone may take it away; the rights of man, for the life which God has lent him is his dearest temporal possession. We recoil in horror from the murderer. Now the most guilty form of murder is that of self-destruction, or suicide.

If we were called on to select some particular instance in proof of the statement that the principles and ideals of paganism are obtaining a broad foothold in our world, and boldly raising themselves in conflict with the morals of Christianity, we might instance the growing frequency of this awful crime, the trivial motives which suffice to prompt men to perpetrate it, and the readiness of many who pretend to be leaders of thought to defend the act as innocent, and even to approve it as noble and heroic. Open your daily newspaper, and you are sure to find a story, or several stories, of self-murder. Now it is some wrongdoer who will not face the legal consequences of his faults, or a voluptuary whose profligate courses have wrecked health and fortune. Or, again, it

is a man who has lost his wealth and can not accept a necessary diminution in his scale of living; or, it is a woman to conceal her shame. A fit of jealousy, an attack of bad temper, even the mere weariness of life is enough, it seems, now to cause men and women to rush before the judgment seat of God, to account to His justice for that life the last act of which has been one of rebellion against His will and a violation of His most dread command.

The crime is now so common that it has ceased to evoke the horror which it raised when public sentiment was controlled by the doctrines of Christianity. For ages the Church has done all in her power to impress her children with a proper conception of this crime. She excludes the dishonored body of the suicide from the consoling rites with which she surrounds the mortal remains of those who have died in her arms, and she refuses to let it rest in the ground where their bodies sleep in the hope of a joyful resurrection. She knows what sorrow and disgrace these stern measures inflict on surviving relatives. Yet, with all her tenderness, she will not mitigate her severity; because she must, for the warning of all, express her condemnation of this dreadful impiety. The nations which were formed under her guidance decreed in their laws that the body of the suicide should be buried with circumstances of ignominy.

But to-day so many have lost their belief in future punishment, the idea of sin has become so faint, that suicide is visited with little or no reprobation. The spokesmen of irreligion declare that man is master of his destiny; and unless, perhaps, he has a family entirely depending on his labor, he may put an end to his life, if it please him to do so. Who shall blame the victim of disease or disfigurement from seeking a happy release from his pain or misfortune? And is it not a sign that the wrongdoer still retains some feelings of honor and manhood if he courageously chooses death to a dishonored life? Who shall blame the victim of fortune or men's malice if he exchanges his misery for the peaceful grave where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary in spirit are at rest?

Such reasoning can be seriously entertained only by minds in which even the most elementary religious faith has either been lost or sadly perverted. We are not in this world as children at a game, from which each one may withdraw whenever he feels displeased, or tired, or if the play no longer amuses him. God has not called us

into existence for nothing. He has created us for a purpose; He has a work for each of us to do. To that end He has endowed us with life. He did not, He could not, constitute us our own irresponsible masters. Life belongs to Him. This sacred treasure He merely entrusts to us, as to stewards who are to employ it in His service. If the steward appropriates to his own use, or if he wantonly destroys his master's property, he is held to be a thief and must expiate his unjust conduct. To employ life, as long as He vouchsafes to grant us the use of it, in the fulfilment of His divine will, is our first, and last, and all-comprehensive duty. Hence Scripture puts in the mouth of Our Lord, "Behold I come that I may do thy will."

The suicide is an unjust steward who makes away with his master's goods; he is a rebel against the divine majesty; he is a cowardly and disloyal soldier who abandons the post which has been entrusted to his care. While suicide is thus a violation of the Creator's supreme dominion over His creature, it is also an act of the deepest injustice against one's own self. We are bound to love ourselves with a reasonable love. This love of self is presupposed in the commandment of charity which ordains us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Now as murder is the greatest injustice we can perpetrate against our neighbor, so suicide is the greatest injustice we can inflict on ourselves. All crimes against nature are particularly hideous; this one outrages the fundamental law of nature, which prompts us to preserve our own corporal life.

The destruction of our temporal life is, indeed, a wicked injustice against ourselves. But the malice of suicide reaches a great deal farther. It is a direct effort to rob also our soul of its spiritual, everlasting life. To be sure, every mortal sin deprives the soul of the principle of spiritual life, which is sanctifying grace. But when man commits any other sin, however grievous, he does not thereby at the same time deprive himself of the opportunity of repentance. In no other sin does he take measures to hinder the subsequent operation of divine mercy. Commonly, however, and as far as he achieves his purpose, the man who takes his own life allows no time for grace or mercy. He wishes that no moment may exist for pardon to intervene between the guilty act and his appearance before God's judgment seat. Well may the wretched man who raises a murderous hand against himself hear the angels of God cry out: "Have pity, have pity on thine own soul." Well

might Our Lord declare of the suicide in the Gospel that it were better for him he had never been born.

How senseless, how impious the excuses that are offered for this sin! The suicide would fain put an end to his existence. He can not put an end to his existence. Death is but the real beginning of our existence. This life below is, as it were, but a moment of infancy which precedes our true existence that is to last for endless ages. We shall live as long as God Himself endures. The dead who died yesterday, our own acquaintances, still live. The countless millions who have passed before us since the race began are all living still, as truly as you or I. The suicide does not escape from existence. His folly consists in this, that he closes the first brief moment of his being in such a way as to fix his future lot in unutterable woe. He can not bear the shame he feels at the reproving word, or the averted faces of his fellows whose esteem he has forfeited for some breach of the moral law, and so he does not hesitate to boldly present himself before the all holy God; as if God hated iniquity less than do men. He can not support the loss of riches, or he shrinks from bereavement or physical pain, consequently he calls down upon himself the sentence which separates him forever from God, his only good, and condemns him to everlasting pain: "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire." Someone thinks that, from some cause or another, he has become a useless burden to himself and to others, and so he ends his life. Such may be the judgment of the world. But the world is not our master; it will not be our judge. We have not to prove to it our economic value in order to continue here. Our Creator alone is our Master. As long as He extends life, so long He assures us we can serve Him. And after the world has pronounced us worthless, and life has become but a protracted pain to ourselves, then may we continue to offer to God service of exceeding worth in His sight. The message of the Cross is that God sends suffering to those whom He loves best, to prepare them for higher glory, or to wean the soul from sin and, for the portion of the journey that remains, to fix it firmly in the narrow path that leads straight to the gate of everlasting life.

Let us thank God for the light of Christian faith which teaches us the meaning and dignity of life; let us shun everything, men and reading and evil ways, that might lead us to waver in our belief in a future life and a judgment to come. Let us walk in the way of

God's commandments, so that we may never fall into any evil that brings dishonor and despair in its train. And when pain of mind or body tries our souls, let us recall that the sufferings of this world are not to be compared to the happiness which will be their reward.

II. The disposition of mind and heart which is especially prohibited by the Fifth Commandment is that vindictive hatred which seeks the satisfaction of revenge for real or supposed injuries that we have sustained. The reason why this sinful state of mind is brought under the Fifth Commandment is because it more frequently than any other prompts man to murderous deeds; for, as St. John declares: "Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer hath eternal life in himself" (I John iii, 15). This desire of revenge, however, when it stops short of killing, frequently leads to other unjust actions, such as destruction of our neighbor's property, of his good name and credit; of his peace of mind—everything, in fact, that we hold dear offers the revengeful man an occasion to gratify his hatred. Now every sin of this kind is an act of injustice, and as such is to be confessed, and calls for reparation to our neighbor for the injury done to him. But the particular malice of revenge consists in this, that every such act of injustice committed with a revengeful purpose takes on a second and a darker dye, inasmuch as it is also a violation of the great distinctive Christian commandment, which calls on us to love our neighbor.

To be merely indifferent to our neighbor's welfare is already to fail in this our great duty. When, however, we pass beyond mere indifference or coldness to active hatred, then we are not merely wanting in the spirit of Christ, we have driven Him out of our hearts and installed in His place the spirit of devilish malice itself.

If we turn to the life and teaching of our divine Lord we find the love of our neighbor to be set forth as the first requisite of His religion. No other lesson is preached so frequently as the law of love, no other vice denounced so unsparingly as hatred and revenge. We say rightly that the sign of the Cross is the mark of a Christian. Yes, it is an outward symbol, but the sign may be displayed when the thing signified is absent. Christ Himself has designated another and a surer mark wherewith to identify his followers: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." And He claims to be the first expounder of this law in its full significance. "A new command-

ment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (Jno. xiii, 34, 35).

To His followers, brought up in the Old Law, it did indeed seem new and strange, for the Master had already told them that it obliged them to love not merely their friends, but also their enemies. And they wondered whether He meant Himself to be taken according to the letter. So one day Peter asked Him: "Lord, how far shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him, seven times?" And Jesus answering, said to him: "I say to thee not seven times, but seventy times seven"—that is to say, times without number (Matt. xviii).

This great law of love is not easy for human nature. It requires the grace of God for its accomplishment. In order that we may so far rise above our natural weakness and passions to fulfil it adequately we require for our encouragement nothing less than the example of God Himself. So God did not publish it to men through the Old Testament whose law was the law of fear. He waited until He had given to sinners the highest proof of His love for them, which was that He should give His own Son for their salvation. Not Moses, but Jesus Christ, incarnate love itself, was the proper prophet of this sublime teaching. He alone by His divine example could impress it adequately on the minds of men and enlarge their hearts to accomplish it. "You have heard that it was said to them of old," He told His disciples, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you resist not evil: if one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other. You have heard it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. v). And He, in the simplest of words, pointed out the profound reason why such must be the conduct of all who understand the truth that religion is a union of the soul with God—"that you may be the children of your father who is in heaven." God is love; by love we are united to Him. But, as St. James says, "if any man says that he loves God, and hateth his neighbor, he is a liar and the truth is not in him." This law of forgiveness, then, is not among the counsels which Our Lord laid down for those who would be perfect, and lead a higher life than that which is demanded of the ordinary Christian; it is, on the contrary, a primary, indispensable element of our Christian duty.

By our correspondence with this obligation of loving our enemies, we regulate, so to speak, the attitude of the Almighty toward ourselves. Sometimes, perhaps, we cherish resentment, some injury rankles in our heart, though we may stop short of allowing our feelings to satisfy themselves by carrying out our revenge. Meanwhile we repeat daily the prayer which Christ himself has taught us: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. But whosoever thus prays to God, while he still remains unrelenting and unforgiving toward any human being, is invoking not mercy but judgment on his head. This is no mere figure of speech or playing with words to produce an effect. Our Lord after dictating that prayer to the Apostles singled out this very petition for special emphasis: "If," He said to them, and to us, "if you will forgive men their offenses your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your offenses" (Matt. vi, 15). In regard to this vice, as is the case with many others, we may easily become the victims of self-delusion; for, if we are not conscious of entertaining it in its grosser form, we may too easily credit ourselves with being entirely exempt from it. The word revenge brings up in our mind a picture of violent deeds, or the unrelenting pursuit of an enemy. Now I have no desire to avenge myself by any lawless action. I would not dye my hands in blood, nor burn down my neighbor's barns, nor swear falsely against his character, so my conscience is easy, thank God, on this point. So you say to yourself truthfully enough, for you live in a civilized community, and you are a law-abiding citizen. You are not subject to uncontrollable fits of anger, nor to the intense passion of hate which is said to be characteristic of some races. Nevertheless, you may be at fault in a minor, yet still a serious, degree.

John, let us say, is, in the eyes of everybody, a good Catholic. For does he not go to Mass faithfully every Sunday and holiday, and regularly approach the Sacraments? He could not be induced to eat meat on a Friday, he has a well earned reputation for probity in his business dealings, he is a model husband and father. Surely he has a right to be called a good Catholic. No, my brethren, he is not a good Catholic. He lacks, in God's sight, the distinctive mark of a follower of Christ. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciple, if ye have love one for another." Some time ago a rival in business did him an injury, or an acquaintance has spoken

ill of him. He has never forgiven that man. He refuses to speak to him, or he insults him when they meet; he thwarts his plans, or, if no opportunity has yet offered, he nurses his wrath, and repeats with steadfast purpose, "Never mind, I will get even with that fellow some day." Perhaps he takes credit to himself for his generosity to works of religion or charity. But he has forgotten, or he has never heard the warning of Christ: "I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar and then remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave, then, thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift" (Matt. v, 22-25).

Mary is a person of exemplary piety, a frequent communicant, and she spends much time in church. She has a horror of mortal sin; the recurrent note in her weekly Confession is, "Father, I have been uncharitable in my conversation." This is her inadequate accusation of the fact that she bears a grudge against some person, refuses to speak to her, takes every opportunity to disparage her, and helps along the circulation of any unfavorable stories that she may hear concerning her. So with all her Confessions and Communions she makes no progress in the spiritual life, in the love of God. Her fault is ample proof that when she says her prayers she does not ponder the meaning of the Our Father, and it is no rash judgment to suspect that much of her other prayers and devotion are equally empty. One victory over her dislike for her neighbor, one honest effort to banish from her heart her feelings of resentment, would be more pleasing to God, more fruitful of grace for herself, than many vain repetitions of empty prayer.

To forgive those who have seriously injured us is never an easy task for human nature. To do so from merely natural motives requires a nobility of soul which belongs only to the few. But grace can where nature can not. Do you find it hard to expel from your heart the feeling of rancor which arises in it as you recall some insult offered to yourself, some wicked lie told about those that you love? Then take your crucifix in your hand. Look at that thorn-crowned head, those pierced hands and feet. The scene of Calvary rises before you. Jesus is dying. On His ears are falling torrents of mockery and blasphemies from the mouths of those who have outraged all justice and exhausted all cruelty in bringing Him to death. Amid His tortures His voice is heard. Is it to express

indignation, or to invoke vengeance? No, He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." From that Cross, too, He speaks to you. He has commanded you to love your enemies, and here He says: "I have given you an example that as I have done so, you, too, may do." Through that death of Christ we all do hope for pardon of our offenses. Our only hope as sinners lies in the boundless mercy of God. He shows us the infallible means to secure it. If you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

XVI. ANGER, HATRED, ENVY, JEALOUSY

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; heareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—I Cor. xiii, 4-7.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Anger—a natural human emotion not sinful in itself—abuse or disorder begets sin. Example of Christ. History past and present shows the enormity of this sin. Holy Scripture constantly likens it to a fire. Difficult to draw line between mortal and venial sin when there is question of anger. Remedies.*

II. *Hatred. Its nature—shows the depravity of the fallen human heart—the malice of the sin shown from daily life as well as from Scripture. The antidote.*

III. *Envy and jealousy. Nature; founded on pride in one form or another. Its evil consequences. How best to overcome these sins. Charity the great weapon.*

I am to speak to you to-day, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, on the sins of anger, hatred and jealousy—three sins eminently contrary to the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the sentiments that should animate the soul of a true Christian, and to that holy virtue of charity whose characteristics are described in those inspired words of St. Paul that I have taken for my text.

I. We will consider first the sin of anger. Anger is not always sinful. There are certain natural emotions that are inevitably awakened within our breasts when anything happens in the nature of things calculated to give rise to them. In the presence of great danger we can not at will prevent ourselves from experiencing the emotion of fear; when some great good is placed before us as possible of attainment, there naturally springs up in us the emotion of hope. It is not the mere *existence* of such feelings within us that is sinful—but it is the indulgence of such feelings in a wrong way, or the permitting ourselves to direct them to a wrong object that constitutes sin. Anger is one of these emotions, the sinfulness of which thus arises from some disorder, some wrong element, that we allow to come in. So, then, we must carefully distinguish between anger as an emotion—a natural emotion, and anger as a sin—in other words, as an emotion wrongly permitted to have its way with us. There is a righteous indignation arising from a zeal for what is

right and just, and from hatred of what is evil and wicked, that a Christian ought to feel. Such is the just wrath felt by a good ruler against those who break the laws by which the peace and prosperity of the community over which he presides are insured; such is the lawful indignation felt and expressed by parents and superiors at the faults or vices of those over whom God has placed them. Such was the indignation of our blessed Lord Himself at the desecration of His Father's house by the money changers and the sellers of sheep and oxen and doves—when He “made a scourge of little cords and drove them out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew” (John ii, 14, 15). Such righteous indignation is sometimes a duty; and you will remember how Heli was punished by God for failing to exercise this duty toward his wicked sons.

But if the emotion of anger is in some circumstances natural and inevitable, and in others even a duty, it is, nevertheless, one of the most dangerous of human passions when wrongly exercised. Also, on account of the weakness brought about in us by the fall, and the loss, by the sin of our first parents, of that perfect control of the emotions by the reason which they enjoyed in the state of innocence, anger is one of those feelings hardest to repress, most easily aroused, and most liable to carry us even beyond all bounds. What evils has not the anger of man against man brought upon the world! Think of the innumerable multitudes of men that have been slain in war to satisfy the anger of princes or of peoples. Think of the numbers who, since Cain lifted his hand against his brother, have fallen victims to private vengeance. Recall what, alas, most of us have experienced, the misery and unhappiness brought into families by men and women yielding to their angry passions. Truly a great part of the miseries of mankind may be traced to this sin. On the other hand reflect what this world would be if all exercised that charity of which St. Paul speaks in the words of my text—if all were patient and kind, envying not, dealing not perversely, but in all simplicity, not provoked to anger, thinking no evil. If this were so, earth would truly be a paradise.

This sin of anger, then, is, in very truth, a great evil; and contemplating the extreme misery that it produces when carried to any extent, we should be constantly on our guard against its beginnings. Anger is constantly compared in Holy Scripture to a fire.

"Kindled" is the word used again and again by the sacred writers to express the rousing of anger. And indeed, it is like fire in the fierceness of its onslaught upon our hearts, in the rapidity with which it gains control over reason and will and all the springs of action, as well as in the devastating effects that it has both upon those who give way to it and those against whom it is directed.

I have pointed out that the *sin* of anger is an *abuse* of the *emotion* of anger—the emotion in itself not being necessarily nor always wrong. To see how the emotion may be abused, let us briefly analyse it. We find, upon reflection, that when we are angry we have a desire to punish in some way the one who has offended us, together with a strong impulse to carry out that punishment. When our position makes it a duty to punish, and there is just cause of offense, and the offender is in some way subject to us or amendable to laws that we have a right to invoke, our anger may be right. I say *may* be right, because, although absolutely speaking it certainly would be right under the conditions I have mentioned, yet it is so very easy for us to deceive ourselves when our own interests are in question.

To come now to the abuse of this possibly lawful emotion of anger. It comes about in three ways. Either having just cause of offense, we allow our anger to become immoderate, greater than the cause justifies, permitting it to gain possession of us with little or no attempt to restrain it on our part, putting ourselves, as we say, "into a passion"; or we may be unjustly angry, angry without a cause; or, lastly, we may be carried away by a vindictive spirit that leads us to desire the infliction of a punishment upon the offender greater than he deserves, or, even if he deserves it, we may wish to see him punished, not because his action has been evil, but to gratify simply our personal and private vengeance.

There are various degrees, dear brethren, in the sin of anger. There is that general impatience and irritability that causes a man to lose his temper on every occasion of annoyance. Then there is a worse kind of anger that breaks out into the use of harsh, intemperate or injurious language. After this comes downright violence in speech and action; and, lastly, that very insanity of passion that finds vent in the perpetration of criminal acts or that cruel and relentless persistence in seeking revenge that has caused some of the greatest tragedies the world has ever seen.

There can be no doubt, dear brethren, that anger, the *sin* of

anger, is a very evil thing. And it brings many evils in its train. You know that it is one of those sins that are called capital sins—because they are the root of other sins and evils that spring from them. From the indulgence of anger spring quarrels, the loss of tranquility and peace of mind, contumacious and injurious words, desperate actions, sometimes even blasphemy against God and holy things. And seeing the evil that springs from anger, it may be that some of you are asking the question whether it be a mortal sin. I will say at once that it is not always a mortal sin; but, at the same time, dear brethren, I would warn you that it is a sin of such a nature that it may easily pass from being venial to being mortal, especially if, by frequent indulgence, it becomes habitual and so constitutes a vice. Some sins there are, indeed, the least wilful and deliberate indulgence in which is mortal. Such is impurity in thought, word, or deed. Others there are which may be venial if not given way to in any considerable degree. Anger is one of these. It may be venial; but it is very dangerous. And, after all, dear brethren, we must not despise venial sin. Next to mortal sin it is the greatest of evils. And in this matter of anger, so prone are we by nature to give way to it, so easily does its least spark blaze out into a raging conflagration, that we can not afford to be careless. We must sternly repress the risings of anger within our bosoms. Some people are more liable to anger than others, and this is for them a certain excuse; though if they are aware of it they are under an obligation the more earnestly to put down this passion. It is a defect which often makes itself known at an early age, and it is gravely incumbent upon parents and all who have charge of the young to watch for the first signs of ill-temper, and by wise, firm and prudent guidance to teach the great lesson of self-control. I do not propose to enter now, my dear brethren, into a minute discussion as to the line that divides mortal from venial sin in regard to anger. If anyone is uneasy in conscience in regard to such matters, the confessional is the best place for his or her relief. I will only point out now that there is a great difference between what we describe as “being in a passion” under some real provocation—provided that we do not deliberately set about to work ourselves up into a fury—and that kind of anger which seeks for vengeance. Both are wrong; but the latter is the more serious because it is the more wilful, and violates the great Christian precepts of charity and justice toward our fellowmen.

Before leaving the subject of anger I will briefly point out to you, my dear brethren, the chief spiritual remedies against this disease of the soul. The best remedy of all, I need not tell you, is the sedulous cultivation of that holy virtue of charity—of love and benevolence to all—without which we are nothing worth, without which no other virtue is perfect. Let us aim at that perfection of love taught us, both in word and deed, by our blessed Saviour, who has commanded us to love our enemies and who prayed for His murderers as they nailed Him to the Cross. It is well also to be armed in advance against those things that may rouse us to anger, not only by a general determination to bear with patience all the annoyances and contradictions that may meet us, but also by looking forward to and preparing ourselves for those possible or probable causes of annoyance that may occur. If, in spite of these precautions, we find the fire of anger kindling within us, let us stifle it in the beginning, when it is comparatively easy to do so. If we let it have its way it will quickly master us, and we shall say and do many things which we shall be sorry for and of which we shall be ashamed. In particular, dear brethren, we should make it a rule of our lives never to speak or act upon the impulse even of just anger; wait till the excitement of our emotion has had time to subside. Some of you may remember a once popular romance, in which the hero is described as a person of very irascible temperament. He endeavored, and successfully endeavored, to overcome this defect and to prevent evil consequences by sitting down at a pianoforte and playing a favorite air whenever he felt angry or impatient. It would be well for us, at such times, to seek relief in some favorite occupation.

II. I will now go on to speak of the sin of hatred. Hatred is a feeling of aversion, a desire to repel from us some person or thing that we look upon as an evil to ourselves. In the case of hatred felt for a person, it may include the desire that some evil may happen to our enemy. Dear brethren, a terrible proof of the depravity to which our fallen nature can descend is found in the fact that men have been known, and are known, to hate Almighty God, their Creator, their Lord, their Father and loving Benefactor. Recent events in certain European countries reveal this hatred of God as unmistakably existent. Oh, the wonderful patience of God that withholds His hand from visiting the most dreadful punishment upon this most heinous of all sins! As we are bound to love

God above all things, so we are bound, by the same law of charity, to love our neighbor; because he, too, like ourselves, is a child of God, beloved of our heavenly Father, redeemed by the precious blood. Hatred, therefore, of others is a sin directly against the supreme Christian law of charity. It is possible for hatred of others to be so slight as to involve venial guilt only; but the guilt may very easily become mortal. You will recognize that the form of hatred which includes wishing evil to another is more sinful than that which stops at a mere aversion. Still the latter is sinful, and may be gravely sinful; for we are bound to love all, even our enemies; and as Christians we may not exclude *anyone* from that charity which Jesus Christ has commanded. But, dear brethren, when I speak of *aversion*, as a form of hatred, I mean *wilful* aversion; the deliberate exclusion of a fellow being from that charity to which we are obliged by the Christian law. And we must remember, dear brethren, that this is a question, not of *liking*, but of the exercise of Christian charity; a matter more of the will than of the feelings. We can not *like* everyone: there are persons for whom one feels a natural antipathy. But that is not hatred. It is a feeling to be overcome if possible; but it is not the sin of hate. The chief difficulty in regard to the duties of Christian charity is felt in obeying the command to love our enemies. To many obedience here seems impossible. But with God's help it is not impossible. By our enemies are meant those who hate us or have offended or injured us. To what are we bound in their regard, in order to escape the sin of hatred ourselves? That sin we surely must wish to avoid. Remember the stern words of St. John, in which he denounced hatred of our neighbor: "He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I Jno. iii, 14, 15); and again, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love his brother, whom he seeth not?" If, dear brethren, we wish to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ Our Lord, and to strive after perfection, we shall endeavor to treat our enemies as dear friends. We do not all rise to this counsel of perfection; and it is, therefore, necessary to ask what we are strictly bound to in regard to our enemies. It is a sad consequence of the weakness of our human nature and our want of generosity that we should sometimes require to know how little we may do without committing sin; but we *are* weak, and we

are, alas, prone to be ungenerous; so that the question must needs be asked and answered.

In regard, then, to enemies, we are bound sincerely to wish them well, and when occasion arises, to express our good will by extending to them the common civilities and kindnesses of life. As Christians we may not exclude them from our prayers. And, in this connection, dear brethren, I may say that one of the most efficacious means of driving out from our hearts any feeling of hatred we may have for another, is to pray for that person. If we find it difficult to act thus, let us recall the many examples given us by the saints, and not only by canonized saints, but by ordinary good Christians. Have you heard of that mother who forgave and shielded the murderer of her only son? You can do untold good, you can be true apostles of charity by doing violence to your feelings, "overcoming evil with good," and forgiving and loving those who are hostile to you. And you will gain them. Remember the charity of St. Stephen, whose dying prayer for his persecutors undoubtedly won from God the conversion of St. Paul. Remember, above all, Him who said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

III. We come now, dear brethren, to a sin which it may well surprise us that people give way to, since it is the cause of so much misery and suffering to those who commit it. I mean the sin of envy or jealousy. To give way to this sin is like cherishing a stinging reptile in one's bosom. Envy, or jealousy, is the daughter of pride. It consists in sadness at another's prosperity because we conceive ourselves to be belittled thereby. It means that we think so much of ourselves as to consider that *we*, and not another, ought to be favored with this or that good thing possessed by the one whom we envy. This sin, dear brethren, like those others of which I have been speaking, if carried to a certain extent, may be mortal. It is, as you know, one of the capital sins, productive of a train of other sins that follow in its wake. Hatred, avarice, ambition, forgetfulness of the law of Jesus Christ—all those may come from envy. Was it not envy that separated the churches of the east from the unity of the Church Catholic—the envy of the bishops of Constantinople—the new Rome, who could not bear the divinely ordained supremacy of the bishops of the old Rome? But, dear brethren, ask your own hearts, and they will tell you what havoc this sin can work in the souls of men. Read the newspapers, and

count up how many crimes in one year may be traced to envy and jealousy. What remedy shall we seek against so great an evil; how shall we cast off the serpent that will poison the life of our souls? Look to the great Communion of Saints of which you are members. Raise your ambitions above the things of earth, and desire those heavenly gifts of grace of which there is enough and to spare for every child of God. Remember that in God's great family the good of one, the prosperity of one, is the good of all. Cultivate the lovely and divine gift of sympathy. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Put away selfishness. Learn to enjoy that best of all delights—self-sacrifice for God and others. If another is better, holier, more perfect than you, envy him not, but imitate his virtues. If another is richer, more prosperous, remember that God's grace and love are worth infinitely more than all the riches of the world. Even if another is loved, and you are not, by one very dear to yourself—a case in which not to envy is indeed most difficult—remember that the love of Jesus Christ is the best love of all—eternal, unchangeable, undying; deeper than any human love; and drive out envy from your soul. We can not compel human love. The love of the heart of Jesus needs no compulsion. It is the fashion among non-Catholics to sneer at those who have entered the religious life on account of some wounding of their human ambitions or affections. But they were truly wise; they were truly undeceived. Having learned, by a sharp and bitter lesson, the vanity of even the best of this world's gifts, they sought their satisfaction where alone true joys are to be found.

But against all these sins that we have been considering, against anger, and hatred, and jealousy, the supreme antidote is charity—Christian love of God and of our fellows for God's sake. I will end, as I began, with the words of St. Paul: "Charity is patient, is timid; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil; heareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things."

XVII. THE SCANDAL OF CATHOLICS

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."—Matt. xviii, 7.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Enormity of sin of scandal—scandal given by Catholics most serious, for it interferes with the work of God and of the Church.*

II. *Outsiders expect a great deal from Catholics—they judge of our religion by the actions of the individual. Hence the bad Catholic is often taken as the standard.*

III. *Catholics should be the light, the salt, the leaven of the world.*

(a) *Scandal by apostates.* (b) *Scandal by children who lead bad lives.*
(c) *Scandal by selfish and ignorant children of the Church.*

IV. *Such scandals a fiery persecution of the Church. History replete with evil examples of this sin. The harvest day will come when the tares shall be separated from the wheat. Our duty as Catholics.*

I. Ordinary scandal is a great sin; it is the murder of a soul by leading it into sin; and the punishment of that scandal is very grievous. But there is another which is much worse; it is the scandal given to the world by the evil lives of those who are called by God to special holiness as children of His Church. King David had led another into grievous sin: thereafter he had repented, and God declared by the mouth of the prophet Nathan that his sin was taken away. Yet there was another aspect besides the personal one, and on that account he suffered a heavy punishment: it was because he had "given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme for this thing" (II Kings xii, 14). The scandals given by Catholics have this same additional aggravation. They cast discredit on the Church and thwart the work which God intended to do by her means; they give a triumph to God's enemies and turn away souls from the path of salvation.

Consider for a moment what the Church is. She is one of the great works of God's hand, the special creation of Our Lord's apostolate and passion, prepared during His three years of public life, born from His wounded side on Calvary, like Eve from the

side of Adam. She is the spouse of Christ, His love, His dove, His beautiful one. The Church is the perpetual house of Jesus Christ under the sacramental forms; it is the abode of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of holiness and truth; it is the mystical body of Jesus Christ, consisting of all His faithful members united closely in one society. It is through the Church that God communicates with men. From the Church we receive all divine graces, the law of God, aid in observing it, and the seeds of virtue, civilization, and salvation. It is through her, too, that we are able to render acceptable homage to God. The Church must then be precious in God's sight; and their guilt must be very great who destroy her fair fame, hold her up to the contempt of men, and put obstacles in her way.

The Catholic Church is holy: she is the holy of holies of the new covenant. Her members, too, are holy, as belonging to such a body, as dedicated to God in Baptism, sanctified by the Sacraments and by infused habits of the virtues. Thus they possess an official holiness, as it is called, which is different from personal holiness. Our private lives ought to correspond with the external character of holiness which belongs to us as members of the Church. We are called to be images of Jesus Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, earnest workers in the vineyard of the Lord, patterns of virtue to the external world. To help us in this there are great examples set before us in Our Lord and His saints, strength is given to us in the Sacraments, and we are encouraged by the hopes of a heavenly reward.

From all this there arises a grave obligation to be holy in addition to our own personal obligation to serve God and lead good lives. We have a duty to the society in which we live, *i. e.*, to the Church of God; and if we lead bad lives we are not merely doing a private wrong to God and ourselves, but we are offending against His whole kingdom, doing discredit to it, and "giving occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme." Membership in the Church confers a dignity on us, we have a character of official holiness from our union with her, and we are additionally bound for that reason to cultivate personal holiness.

II. Those who are outside the Church, even though they resist her authority and deride the privileges which she holds from God, yet seem to recognize the official holiness of her members, and expect more from them than from other men in the way of personal

holiness. A Catholic is universally regarded as a man of higher pretensions and obligations than any other man; he is watched more closely; he is judged by a stricter standard; he is expected to be better than others; more notice is taken of his shortcomings; more scandal is given by his infidelities.

In the case of a Catholic men are more ready to associate his life with his religion than if he belonged to another denomination. Each Catholic is looked upon as a representative of his Church, as formed by her, as a specimen of her influence and a test of her success; and the Church is judged by his behavior. There are some men or other who have formed their notion of the Catholic Church from the life of each one of us; and we are responsible for that notion. If we are lukewarm, worldly minded, or scandalous, then besides the guilt of our sins in themselves, we have also to answer for disgracing the Church and giving men a false idea of her. But if Christ lives in our mortal bodies we show Him forth to men in some degree, however obscure our lives may be, and we are the means of elevating the Church of Christ in the estimation of men, and so of bringing their souls nearer to salvation and advancing the glory of God. A stranger in a foreign land is never judged as if he were a solitary individual; he is always taken as a type of his country; and, rightly or wrongly, men form their opinion of it from him. If he be an ambassador his country's reputation is in his keeping, and he is responsible for maintaining it honorably; his actions are not merely his own private concern, they either benefit his country or they cause it shame.

This is especially the case with bad Catholics. They are accepted, much more readily than good men, as the accredited representatives of their religion. Evil is a great deal more obtrusive than good. Humility always cloaks the highest virtue. The majority of those who lead the most Christ-like lives, are, by the very conditions of the highest religious life, secluded from the gaze of mankind. They do not proclaim their good deeds, and as for their personal sanctity, it is a secret hidden in their hearts and known only to God. But evil rises to the surface; and one man of scandalous life draws more attention than one hundred patient followers of the Crucified.

The enemies of religion are always on the watch for weapons to use against it, and the most effective ones are the scandals of the unworthy children of the Church. Our foes make the most of

these, and conspire to be silent about the good which the Church has done, and the multitudes of souls that have been raised to holiness by her doctrines. Bad Catholics are put forward as ordinary specimens of the whole body; and the effects of Catholic teaching are looked for, not in those who have been obedient, but in those who have disobeyed that teaching. The necessary failures which must attend every good work are represented as being the natural fruit of the Catholic system. Then the Gospel test is applied to the Church: "By their fruits you shall know them. . . . Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matt. vii, 16, 17). And the Church of Jesus Christ is held up to execration as a sink of all corruption. Woe indeed to the Church on account of scandals! Who can tell how many souls have been lost to God through false arguments founded on the true facts of actual scandals?

The wicked children of the Church are her worst enemies. They would do her less harm if they persecuted her openly from without. External enemies are not so dangerous as the secret traitor who is within the camp. Calumnies and distortions may in time be refuted and thrown aside, but scandals have real existence and live forever in remembrance. A bad Catholic stirs up and perpetuates evil prejudices; the scandal of his life seems to prove the truth of all the calumnies that were on the way to being forgotten. If such a one left the Church he would in some measure remove the stigma from her; but in her patience the Church does not cut him off, and so he remains, an "enemy of her own household," rendering evil day by day in return for the hospitality which allows him to abide within her limits. It is indeed a bitter reflection that there are so many men of evil life who can yet claim to be really members of the Catholic Church; it is bitter to feel that the children of the Church are those who do her the cruelest wrongs. The Church may say to them as the Psalmist said prophetically of Judas: "If my enemy had reviled me I would indeed have borne with it. And if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him: But thou, a man of one mind with me, my guide and my familiar friend" (Psal. liv, 13, 14).

III. Our Lord has told us what he wishes His followers to be—the light of the world, the salt of the world, the leaven of the world. The Church ought in all its members to present a picture

of holiness and a reproduction in many forms of the perfection of Jesus Christ. So in general it does: but in very many cases it does not. In many individual lives, and even in large communities, the Church is made to appear, if seen in them alone, very different from the spouse of Christ adorned with all holiness. Consider some of the parodies which pass current with many as giving true pictures of the Church.

1. First, we may take those who have been baptized into the Church and partially educated under her influence; who have then broken away from her grasp, rejected her with scorn, and joined the ranks of her bitterest enemies. These prove in themselves that "the corruption of the best turns out the worst." The knowledge of truth and holiness does really serve to debase a man when he will not let it improve him. For his greater sins against light and grace he is more completely abandoned by God to blindness of the spirit and corruption of the flesh. The fallen Catholic is a byword and a scandal even among bad men. Against the Church his hatred is more implacable, his violence more crafty, than those of her other enemies. Such men unfortunately are not a few; they form large bodies, perhaps even the principal part of some nations. As an aggravation of misfortune the Church is often held responsible for the wickedness of such men; they are known to have been her children, to have borne her name, and all their misdeeds are put down as the result of her influence. Many men will give no credit to the Church for her holy laws and success in sanctifying souls, but if anyone refuses obedience and plunges into sin, they are ready to denounce her as the cause of the scandal. The prophecy of Our Lord that scandals must needs come is abundantly corroborated by the present and past history of the Church; and her enemies take care to put upon her shoulders the full burden of the discredit. This is sufficient to account for a great portion of the ignorance and prejudice that blind so many souls to the holiness of the Church and her divinity.

2. There are large classes of others who retain their faith and veneration for the Church, who obey some of her laws, and hope to die in her communion; but they do not join good works to their faith, they live in habits of sin, they give public scandal by their un-Christian lives. These are no true representatives of the Catholic body, but they are often accepted as such, and are put into unfavorable comparison with the most upright men of other

denominations, who have the misfortune indeed to profess a corrupt belief, but have been faithful to what they know of the Christian law. Such bad Catholics seem to do all they can to publish their wickedness to the world, and at the same time to proclaim their faith, as if to make it appear that there is a natural connection between the two. Religion is discredited not only by their vices but even by such virtues as they have, vivid faith, warm love for their Church, the observance of certain religious practises. Outsiders see only the inconsistency of strong belief joined with practical disregard of the most awful of truths; they can not understand it. They conclude, then, that Catholics either are shameful impostors if, as it seems, they do not believe what they profess; or that they have most seared and hardened consciences if, believing as they say, they dare to act as they do. Think of the number of persons whose acquaintance among Catholics is limited to such as I speak of. Who can blame them if they have failed to recognize the spouse of Christ beneath the disguise that is put upon her ?

3. Among the authors of scandal we must reckon many fairly good Catholics who have little idea of the harm they do. The fact of their goodness shows up more prominently the stains upon their character. They are worldly minded, or frivolous, or over fond of comfort; they are, perhaps, spiteful in speech, or lax about truthfulness, or wanting in candor, or inclined to take undue advantages in their own interest; or it may even be that they are ignorant of the ways of the world, or go too far in disregarding popular opinion, or are inconsiderate in trivial things. All these are but small matters as weighed in the scale of morality, and are quite consistent with deep devotion, and with regular and blameless life. But they are a mote in the eye, and the world makes more of it than of the beam in its own eye. People outside the Church have but little idea of proportion in moral and spiritual matters; they confuse meannesses with depravity, bad taste with sin. So they are often more scandalized by a venial than by a mortal sin. Sometimes such a person is cautiously drawing near to the Church, impressed by the idea of its solemnity and holiness, expecting to see these qualities reflected in every Catholic; he is shocked suddenly by some unexpected weakness or imprudence in a Catholic otherwise good, he turns in disgust from the Church, wounded to the death by something comparatively trivial, and a

soul is lost through the careless laxity of some well-meaning person.

IV. The existence of such scandals is one of the greatest trials of the Church, it impedes her action, and is a cause of affliction and shame to her zealous members. But, as Our Lord tells us in the text: "It must needs be that scandals come."

1. Scandals must be, because the human will is its own master, and is never forced by God to choose good rather than evil. The Church is God's instrument; it gives certain knowledge, it exhorts continually, it affords efficacious aid to man's weakness, but it can not overcome his will; its action does not go beyond that of God. Divine faith and grace are necessary for a life of supernatural virtue, but they do not ensure a virtuous life. There man's freedom comes in; and if he resist, all the power of religion will fail to make him a model Christian; but, on the contrary, will increase his guilt and make a worse man of him.

2. Knowledge and obedience do not always go together. It is quite possible to believe firmly and yet to revolt against God. There is such a thing as faith without good works; it is a "dead" faith, because it is ineffective, but it is a real and true knowledge of divine things on God's word. So, too, there are virtues without faith, good indeed as far as they go, but incomplete and dead, because not actuated by supernatural life. Hence it must often happen that the life of one who professes the true religion will compare unfavorably with the lives of some who are on a lower religious level, or who are entirely without saving faith. Some observers, therefore, might be led to think that the good tree produces bad fruits, and the bad tree good fruits, and so might be deceived as to which is which.

3. The goodness of God confers immense graces on the members of the Church, but as they are still in a state of probation and trial, He never gives them the heavenly privilege of sinlessness, nor appoints a limit to their perversity and possible degradation. There is nothing in revelation to suggest that those who have been illumined will never fall away, or that even the most favored servants of God are secure from sudden and disgraceful lapses into sin and scandal. More than this, membership in the Holy Church of Christ is not limited by Him to good men. He compares His kingdom on earth to a net which takes, not only large fish, but many that are small and worthless. He likens it to a field where

tares are growing among the wheat; and He will not have them rooted up, but allows them to grow undisturbed on equal terms with the good seed. God endures the wicked with patience even in His own field; the Church does not disown them and cut them off by excommunication, grievous though their presence may be. They remain, if so they at last repent; they exercise the zeal of the fervent; and while they warn others to be humble lest they, too, should fall away, they encourage them, in the event of that misfortune, to hope for patience and forgiveness.

4. Sacred history abounds in examples of these things. A great body of the heavenly host revolted in heaven itself. Adam straightway, at a word, threw aside belief, and gratitude, and obedience. The Israelites were not deterred from continual idolatries by the truths of revelation, the holiness of their law, the solemnities of worship, the exhortations of the prophets, or the many visible mercies of God. St. Paul had to rebuke his Christians for such scandals "as the like is not among the heathens" (I Cor. v, 1).

5. So, too, it is not to be expected that the Church should be free from all scandals. She has to do a difficult work with unpromising material. She has to deal, not with the perfect, but with very imperfect men, weak, beset with temptations, struggling painfully from the lower to the higher life. In that path there are many bitter experiences, many relapses, many total failures. Time brings no change: the Church's work must always be imperfect, for it will not be finished till the Son of Man come in judgment. Her life will always be a struggle against wickedness both inside as well as outside her fold, scandals will always dog her footsteps while she fulfils her mission of holiness, as the shadow follows him who walks in the sunlight. Christ will not conquer completely till the last great day. Only when the harvest comes will the tares be separated from the wheat. Only at the judgment day will the greater part of the Church's work, her hidden work, be brought to light, and her power and sanctity be made manifest.

Our duty meanwhile is to overcome evil by good, and to neutralize the scandals which some give, by the holiness of our lives. We need to be very cautious; for not only is there danger of our giving scandal incautiously and doing the work of Satan, while we plume ourselves on being models of goodness, but we must try to avoid giving the scribes and Pharisees of the present day an opportunity of distorting our actions to the discredit of our religion. We must,

therefore, walk circumspectly, we must be in all things perfect as far as God may grant us. Our lives should be a living commentary, setting forth the holiness of the Church, showing what are the real fruits of her doctrines and laws, compelling men to render her the tribute of their praise despite their prejudices, and manifesting Christ in our mortal bodies.

XVIII. IMPURITY A TERRIBLE EVIL

BY THE REV. JOHN W. SULLIVAN

"Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God."—Matt. v, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—Of the various rewards promised in the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest, "to see God," is reserved to "the pure of heart." As it is the highest award, the struggle for it is the most difficult. The vice opposed to the virtue which is crowned with the vision of God, is a terrible evil, most severely punished here and hereafter.

Division.—Punishments (1) in the past, (2) in the future, and (3) in the present, inflicted upon the impure. (4) Sources. (5) Cures.

I. God directly and specifically visits it with His wrath in the past: v. g., the Flood; the fate of the cities of the plain; the four and twenty Israelites slain, Onan, Solomon, David: condition to which it reduced Corinth and Rome. What writers tell us and what we have seen ourselves.

II. Future maledictions pronounced against it. The impure shall not possess the kingdom, they shall be reserved for the pool of fire and brimstone, shall be separated from God for all eternity—the pain of loss.

III. Present evils—(a) general summing up. Man is enslaved, involved in mental, moral, bodily, and social misfortunes. Impurity, as the origin of so many sins, is placed among the seven capital sins. (b) Evil effect on the spiritual life. That it utterly corrupts our ideal of God is illustrated by the pagan mythology. By rendering the sinner suspicious of those around him, it blinds him to the influence of their good example. (c) The moral and bodily afflictions, (1) Secrecy is almost impossible because of the entire change of mind and heart that must take place. (2) Sins committed in the body are punished in the body. (d) Social evils—effects of the sin on youth personally and on his power for harm. Disguises its appearance to entrap its victims. It brings social ostracism on the seducer and the seduced. That homes are disrupted, lives shattered by the sin the records of the criminal and the divorce courts bear witness. It is the enemy of domestic affections, v. g., Amnon and David.

IV. Some causes—our natural inclinations; the teaching and example of companions; suggestions from things read and seen; the carelessness of parents and guardians.

V. Cures—the heart is the source of the evil, and so it must be purified. Prayer, mortification, repentance and Confession are among the best means of overcoming the evil. The example of Jesus is a great help.

Conclusion.—The temptations are sore and grievous, but it is easier to resist them than to rise from a fall. Let purity sit at the fountain head.

In reading this chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel you will notice that there are blessings, each different and peculiar in its kind, in store for "the poor in spirit," "the meek," "the mourners," "the

merciful," "the peacemakers," "the just," "the patient," but none equal to that for "the clean of heart." "To secure the kingdom of heaven," "to possess the land," "to be comforted," "to have one's fill of God's justice," "to obtain mercy," "to be called the children of God"—are not these great and glorious rewards? are not these privileges to be sought after? But "to see God"—to see Him who is the Maker of all things visible and invisible—this is the greatest of blessings, and this is reserved for "the pure of heart." To see Him *now* and to see Him hereafter—for this life and the next are the beginning and the continuation of one God-given life—this our infancy, that our maturity. The future will be but the more perfect doing and enjoying of what we do and enjoy here imperfectly. The pure heart sees God here, though imperfectly—"we see now through a glass in a dark manner," but then we shall see Him "as he is," "face to face."

To secure this goodliest portion of man's chief good, means a tremendous contest with the most subtle of enemies. To be "pure as Christ is pure," "to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," bespeaks a lifelong warfare against the flesh and the devil. The struggle with impurity is not new, the punishments meted out to the conquered are not modern—misery, disease, poverty, social ostracism to-day, hell to-morrow. Who would think that with so many terrible consequences staring them in the face there should be found so many to transgress? Many who have a horror of the sins of murder and injustice, are not so fearful of impurity; and yet this is as severely forbidden and from the beginning was more severely punished.

Abominations of this class brought the deluge on the world to destroy not alone the sinners but even the creatures that were made for his use and service. The first flashes of that fire which shall one day purge the earth of all uncleanness were drawn from the heavens by the impurities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Moabites feared for their safety, for they knew Israel was invincible while she remained obedient to God's commands. Therefore, did they sacrifice their daughters' honor to the public weal. Israel succumbed to the temptation, and the lives of four and twenty thousand of her sons atoned, in one day, for the sin. Did not the land of Canaan spue forth its inhabitants because impure rites and incest made their extermination a necessity, lest they should breed a moral pestilence? Why did the prophet break the tablets

of the covenant, and arm brothers to take vengeance on their nearest and dearest, but for the lewdness that accompanied the worship of the golden calf? So licentious were the profanations which the wickedness of King Manasses wrought in the holy places and brought in as a flood on Jerusalem, that God declared He would bring evils on Jerusalem and Juda "that whosoever shall hear of them, both his ears shall tingle" (IV Kings xxi, 12). Onan defiled the marriage-bed by a sin of lust, and, therefore, "the Lord slew him because he did a detestable thing." Overcome by lust of the flesh the wise Solomon became foolish, the strong Sampson grew weak, and the holy David was sin-stained. When Our Lord visibly entered the warfare, during His earthly ministry, the adulterous character of the generation elicited His severest rebukes—"this is an evil and adulterous generation." No; the struggle is not new and God knows that it is not light nor its victims few. To what a lamentable condition this terrible sin reduced a place like Corinth, we may judge from one of St. Paul's Epistles, and what dread havoc it wrought at Rome, we may infer from fearful passages in another. The writings of poets, satirists and historians, the sights we see around us daily and on all sides, our own personal experiences tell too plainly and too sadly the course of this capital sin and its dire effects.

The power of God is not limited nor is His arm shortened. Appalling as have been the visible scourges with which His wrath has chastised directly the impure in this life, severe and dreadful beyond measure are the woes denounced against them in the hereafter. "Fornicators and adulterers," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "God will judge," and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "They shall not possess the kingdom of God" (I Cor. vi, 9). How can they since, as St. Paul declares, "they have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v, 5). "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented, and especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" (II Peter ii, 9, 10). Reserve them? For what? St. John answers: "They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Apoc. xxi, 8). To them is promised not the vision of God, there is another portion, another vision—that of the worm and the outer darkness where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth—darkness rendered blacker by the

one brief but bright sight of their Judge surrounded by the dazzling glory of heaven—darkness rendered more painful by that sense of loss which comes upon them with the irrevocable sentence, "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels,"—darkness rendered more terrible by the personal presence of him who brought them into it by the haunting words: "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Apoc. xxii, 11).

Some of these terrible evils have been visited upon the impure in the past, some await them in the future. They may be, alas! too faint and far-distant to spur us on to virtue or to check us in vice. But the monster of impurity has wages, and very bitter wages in the present, wages that are pain in soul, in mind, in body, in social life; wages that are paid with stern justice to the very last penny.

This sin destroys holiness, impedes the workings of grace, it weakens reason, turns one wholly to sense, making him brutish, stupid, insensible. It disrupts domestic affections, robs man of his truest joys, runs on for life and is scarcely, if ever, shaken off. Why should not the love of youth be elevated by the desire to reproduce the happy homes of childhood's memory, why should not sisters be the ideals of modesty to brothers, why should not children be edified by the unbroken harmony of parents? There is no reason why but the workings of that foul sin. No crime enslaves man more than that of impurity. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he finds no rest, no ease till he returns. Not content with returning himself, he brings along seven other spirits more wicked than himself. The sinner's soul becomes the rendezvous of this horde, and the last state of this man is worse than the first. No crime involves man in greater misfortune mentally, morally and socially. No crime is more shameful, more productive of the insupportable sting and remorse of conscience. What is first done from frailty is soon committed with full consent and deliberation, and he who falls with anguish and remorse, in the end becomes a hardened sinner. Justly is it numbered among the seven capital sins, for it is the seminary of numberless other vices, of endless evils and is an unremitting enemy of salvation. It is, of all the sins to which we are prone, the most pernicious and destructive, the most filthy, the most abominable in God's sight. "From its fruits you shall know it."

As sure as impurity has been admitted it fatally propagates itself. It is much like drifting—a quiet, still, unnoticed, perpetual influence

ever pulling in one direction, loosening one strand then another until the anchor is uprooted and the vessel, rudderless, pilotless, chartless, is left at the mercy of the waves. It affects parts of the being seemingly most remote from the original mischief. The soul becomes insensible to God and the things of God; as the Apostle has it: "The sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the spirit of God" (I Cor. ii, 14). Man who was once made in the image of God, made for himself gods in his own image. Is it not a truth that the more defective are the qualities within us, the more defective are our conceptions of the relationships around us, and the more imperfect must be our ideas of God? The gods of the heathen were impersonations of the qualities of their own nature; for as the evil passions of fallen man are stronger than the good, they naturally became the most prominent features in his ideal of a god who was like himself. Fearfully does the pagan mythology, in the light of these truths, testify to the impurity of the heart from which was drawn their notion of God. Every evil passion and baser appetite took its place in their heaven and had its altars upon earth. What we long for most, what we look to most, that is our heaven! Whatever we bow down to most, whatever we worship most, that is our god! What idea of a God of purity can he have, then, whose nature is cruel, selfish and impure? What conception of God has he who has so debased his moral nature as to be incapable of understanding or loving the better and higher natures of his fellowmen? Is it not such a one that God Himself rebuked, saying: "Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee" (Ps. xlix, 21)? Is not the God of that man, if he thinks of God at all, as much an idol, as much the God of his own impure and depraved imagination, as ever was the god of the heathen? A man's ideas of God must depend in a great measure on what he is himself. The light that beams pure and bright from the throne of the Almighty takes the hue of the moral atmosphere through which it passes. God Himself has told us, through the Psalmist, that with the holy He will be holy still, with the innocent He will be innocent still, and with the perverse He will be perverse? (Ps. xvii).

If the God above is not spotless in their sight, how can men like themselves be pure? He whose ideas of love, goodness and purity have fallen below the standard of human excellence believes, and must believe, that those around him are similarly blemished.

How can it be otherwise? "To them that are defiled nothing is clean, both their mind and their conscience are defiled."

Inward purity! Whoever that is tainted has ascribed that to mortal man? "Out of the unclean heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," and the jaundiced eye of his spirit invests everything with the hue of its own disease. What to him who will not "flee youthful lusts" are the natural affections of home, the innocence and simple pleasures of childhood, the reverence for old age and its crown of glory? What, to him who will not cleanse a heart that has become the source and font of defilement, are the ties and endearments of family and friends? What, to him from whom proceed evil thoughts, adulteries and fornications, are the sweet sister, the helpful wife, the mother of children, but spotted and stained creatures like himself? What value can he set upon the beautiful in nature, the lovely in virtue, the sublime in wisdom, the mysterious in grace? With eyes overclouded, polluted eyes, he sees not, "for unto them that are defiled nothing is pure."

Each class of sin has its own results. Drunkenness has its train of poverty, blurred intellects and weakened bodies. Pride avenges itself by the isolation in which it leaves a man. Murder fears where there is no fear, makes a coward of the brave. Impurity punishes its victims by making entire recovery almost impossible, by creating an appetite which it is mortal sin to satisfy and agony to refuse, by sadly and painfully emphasizing the law that sins committed in the body are punished in the body.

How frequently is the wicked plea made, and even admitted, that one more transgression, another and another, will make matters no worse! One more and then I shall be pure. Oh, how interminable is the distance between the impure heart, in its present state, and that holiness without which no man shall see God! What mountains and mountains of difficulty lie between purity and impurity! It is not one sin that must be laid aside, not one act of fornication or one adultery that must be stopped, it is the seven unclean spirits, who have entered in with the devil of fornication or of adultery, that must be driven out. It is not one act nor one sin that must be conquered, but a natural tendency which your acts have abused and whose power they have fatally strengthened, The whole tide of thought energized by indulgence must be turned back again, the fountain and the stream must be made pure.

Imagination, which has run riot in its revels, is to be restrained; desires, given the free wing of the winds, must be checked; affections that have grown strong in the unhampered exercise of lust are to be converted and purified. Then, with a realization of the difficulty of the task, the sense of impossibility takes hold—that chill breath of the iceberg that has so often checked many a warm aspiration after purity. We may fly from the world and from the devil, but we can not fly from the flesh. This domestic enemy is so closely interwoven with corrupt nature, that nothing but an extraordinary grace can move us to repent it, nothing but death can totally destroy it.

Warnings conveyed by the silent but sure approach of God's judgments, how are they accepted? That emaciated body, those trembling hands, that lack-luster eye, that moody solitariness, those shattered nerves, those withered affections, those keen but secret pains, the disappearance of youthful promise, the sense of utter loneliness, of degradation and stain, of fear lest everyone must know or notice the defilement, the inability of the heart to bestow itself in chaste, modest, pure affection—yea, and those still more vile and painful afflictions the very names of which are as revolting as they themselves—are these taken as warnings from God? Is not some other reason, and not the true one, given or accepted for these awful punishments in the body for the sins committed in the body? Have the words of Holy Scripture any meaning for the impure: "A young man, according to his way, will not depart from it when he grows old" (Prov. xxii, 6)? Do they believe the saying of Bacon that "the debauches of youth are conspiracies against old age" and that "one pays dearly in the evening for the follies of the morning"?

Impurity is a sin which will always abound; men will ever have to strive with the natural uncleanness of the human heart; there will ever arise an unwholesome curiosity to lift the veil which God's order draws. There will always be a difficulty in attaining the mastery over appetite, in becoming not like the brute, coarsely gratifying its lusts, but like the restored man, denying himself, bridling himself when indulgence is unlawful. The dread examples which Scripture gives of its evil consequences, the abnormal idea of God, the horrible suspicion of others it engenders, the shattered body and the benumbed mind can scarcely check its advances once it is admitted.

At the very foundations of society it works with fatal results. What a terrible evil that which robs our youth of their blooming health, saps their promising maturity, dims their clearness of mind, soils their innocence of soul! How one single boy, careless of speech or hard in conduct, flings a poisonous seed abroad on the air, which may seem to fly away, as the wind, out of sight, but settles down somewhere and then springs up and bears plant and flower and fruit of sin in another soul! How terrible the evil that permits one boy or one girl to corrupt secretly or openly an entire neighborhood, a whole school! that suffers one agent to open the gates of a degenerate nature and drown the innocent in a flood of foul waters!

How repulsive it is in its true colors, how revolting it sounds when called by its true names, which we dare not mention! Conscious of this, its victims shrewdly veil it under false colors and call it by names that may not shock unsuspecting ears. And yet though the world excuses the vice and tries to pass it off as a harmless pleasure, it still remains true that every man, even the sinner, despises the impure in heart. Who will receive into his home that sower of immorality, the smiling villain who is known to pour his vile suggestiveness into innocent ears, who is known to revel with the daughters of shame in the homes of Satan? Trust the sea with your tiny boat, trust fickle winds, trust the miser's generosity, the tyrant's mercy, but trust not the artful scoundrel armed with obsequience for your pride, praise for your vanity, generosity for your selfishness, words of religion for your conscience, spicy scandal for your curiosity. None that go with him return again. What chance has she who has listened to her own vanity, then to the flattery of others, and finally sold her jewel of great price? Conscience may ply her scorpion-whip, there may be repentance, bodily suffering, but the door of return is forever shut and the inner voice cries out, "Thou art dishonored, thou art stained, thou art lost." The lovelier the thing is, the more hopeless, the more lamentable its ruin. This sin ruins that which God planned to be so lovely—the sister, the ideal of purity to her brothers; the gentle, loving wife; the tender, devoted mother—yet the ruin of all this, all this forfeited for the short career of profligacy, short as the life of a moth! What mysteries, what blessings, what joys does this vice break in upon and desecrate! Were it not that St. Paul warns us that these things should not be so

much as mentioned, I might refer you to the accounts of our criminal courts; I might advise you to read the scandalous reasons advanced for numberless divorces; I might mention that one of the gravest charges against our boodling officials is that they accept an income for the protection of this blackest of crimes. What misfortunes, terrible and lasting, it begets! Homes disrupted, whole lives ruined, hearts broken, souls lost—and for what? “A heinous crime, a grievous iniquity, a fire that devoureth even to destruction and rooteth up all things that spring” (Job xxxi, 11, 12).

“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.” Can this ever be the case with the impure? Sensuality, in all its shapes, is ever selfish, cruel, malignant—the enemy of love. So Ammon discovered, when he had accomplished his guilty purpose on his sister Tamar: “So that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her” (II Kings xiii, 15). So David discovered when the sight of the accomplice of his sin, who had been the occasion of yet deeper sin, recalled to him with agony whose she once had been, and when the news of the war flashed before his eyes that phantom form of his noble mighty one, placed by his orders where the battle was hottest, faithful unto death to him, the faithless. So she discovers who murders the innocent consequences of an unholy love, to conceal her sin, or the unconscious legitimate result of the God-ordained institution of marriage. She has sounded the deepest depths of sin, sacrificed an immortal soul for a mess of pottage.

Look around you, you need not look far to see the horrors of this social evil. Think of the many who come to be united in marriage and who should come as penitents. Think of the results that accrue from the very suggestiveness of our penny arcades, our theatrical posters, the flippant, fearless expose of the most delicate subjects by our theaters, our publications, our newspapers. Think of the open, shameless presence of fallen women in our streets, filled with a hellish readiness to entice others to follow them in the ways of sin. Consider that these human instruments are doing the work of demons, entrapping innocent girls, prowling about homes, shops and hospitals, offering pretended kindness and alluring to sham homes. Remember there are cities in this country of ours where the worst of traffics has become a vested interest. Think of her who teaches her unsuspecting sister the trick of infanticide. Think of your own sinful carelessness in not properly

guarding your daughters against what not only might be but are occasions of sin in their own homes. Your young sons whose battles are, of all, the most difficult, are left unwarned and unprotected when the worst of temptations have commenced the struggle, when men, criminally even if heedlessly, are putting into their hands circulars or pamphlets they should never read. Reflect on some of these things for a moment; they will bring up many more terrible evils that will make you wonder that the waters of the sea do not rise again or the flames that destroyed the cities of the plain do not flash.

But thank God there are still brave, courageous men, chaste women, family affections, the blossoms which still bloom on the desecrated temple. There are still to be found even the ten just men, who will save the world and see God, men who are not only outwardly, but inwardly, pure of heart. The source of the evil is the heart, for out of it proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications. Christ went to the root of the matter when He said: "Blessed are the pure of heart." The cure must begin at the heart. See to your hearts first, suffering no unclean imagination to harbor within, training yourselves to habits of self-control in all things. Unchaste thoughts unchecked are like serpents' eggs, which the warmth of feelings hatches in bosoms. Crush them at once or cherish the viper in your heart and be safe if you can. It is against thoughts that we have primarily to guard (Matt. xv, 18). If the heart is pure—then are the lips, the hand, the life, like a stream from a fountain. Defile your lips with no words unbecoming the sanctity of a child of God. Read no publications that may inflame or defile you—better they should perish in the flames than that you should be cast into hell. Prayer, mortification, confession are preventives for all and remedies for those who have fallen, for those who have wallowed in sin. It is easy for sensual, comfort-loving people of the world to scoff at these things, but hard names are not arguments, and abuse of the spiritual necessities does not destroy the obligation of observing them. Then, too, we have Jesus, our exemplar—"even as he is pure." He came to purify us by His own purity, to be the fountain where we may wash and be clean. By His help we may be *made* pure, for He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax.

When you are contracting habits of impurity you are dealing most fearfully with spiritual things, you are ruining your body, the

temple of the Holy Ghost; you are weakening your will, tightening thin cords into the iron chain of habit. The temptations are sore and grievous, you carry the evil about with you in the very body wherewith you are clothed. Yet if it be hard to stand firm against temptation, it is ten times harder, with tainted imagination, vitiated memory, and weakened will, to rise once you have fallen. It is harder to rise, for you may reach that state where the body refuses to respond but the mind continues to desire. It is harder because the same motives that persuaded you to lose your innocence will dissuade from repentance. Impurity is Satan's deadliest weapon against you. Impurity of every kind, deliberate in word, thought or deed, is a mortal sin. But if the temptations are the strongest that beset you, if the evil results of yielding are the most terrible that befall you—so also is the reward; there is none greater.

"With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth not from it" (Prov. iv, 23). Let purity, like Eliseus, sit at the fountain head and heal the unwholesome waters, putting sweet for bitter, ministering good thoughts, holy desires, pure affections, heavenly love, goodly deeds, then will you be pure of heart and yours will be the reward "to see God."

XIX. ON PURITY

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, A.M.

"Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God."—Matt. v, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Purity a special mark of predilection. This is founded on the words of St. Matthew, quoted above, on certain texts of the Apocalypse, and on the compatibility of the same with the spirituality of man's nature.

II. The beauty of purity; and the marks of His favor which God has always shown to the clean of heart. *Examples.*

III. Although purity is not the most excellent of virtues, it is the most in harmony with the spirituality of man's nature. The origin of man—the most exalted and noblest of God's works in the visible universe.

IV. Purity in harmony with the elevation of man's nature by the Incarnation; and in harmony with the sanctity of man as the temple of the Holy Ghost.

V. The horrible consequences of impurity. How it enslaves the votary of it and works destruction in the soul. *Examples.*

VI. An appeal to practise purity, and so attain the blessed end of man's creation. Means to be followed in preserving purity.

Among the favored ones whom the Saviour called blessed, there is but one class to whom is promised the ineffable privilege of the vision of God, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God" (Matt. v, 8). The clean of heart alone shall enjoy that favor which is the bliss of paradise; they alone are worthy to gaze through the veil of the Eternal and to behold Him face to face, St. Augustine, Bede, Chrysostom, and other interpreters of Holy Writ, understand by this cleanness of heart referred to by the Saviour that simplicity which is begotten of innocence and guilelessness. Others among the fathers and sacred writers refer to it as the generic virtue of freedom from mortal sin. And if the foulness of sin is the peculiar work of the spirit of darkness; if the soul stained with it in his special abode—"I will return to my house" (Luke xi, 24), it is highly compatible that freedom from such defilement should be that cleanness of heart eulogized by the Saviour. But learned commentators of Holy Scripture love to regard Our Saviour's words as referring to the specific virtue of purity. And whatever opinion may be accepted as the meaning of the scriptural phraseology it is certain that the angelic virtue of purity is a special mark of pre-

dilection, and that the pure ones alone of the earth are admitted to the special companionship of the unspotted Lamb of God in His heavenly kingdom: "I saw and behold a Lamb stood on Mount Sion and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his father written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was of harpers harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the ancients and no one could say the canticle but those hundred and forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. xiv, 1-4).

So beautiful in the sight of God is this virtue that Jesus Christ when on earth would have no other for His Mother than the purest of virgins. Thus was it decreed by the councils of the Most High, and foretold by the prophet who announced the gladsome tidings of His coming. "Behold the Virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaias vii, 14). His foster-father, the glorious head of the Holy Family, was a pure virgin. His precursor, the angel of the wilderness who prepared the way before Him, was a virgin. The most beloved of His Apostles, who leaned on His bosom at the last supper, and to whom as a most precious legacy He confided the care of His most Blessed Mother, was a virgin. And the little children He commanded to be brought to Him on account of the purity of their hearts. Thus spoke the psalmist. "He that loveth cleanness of heart shall have the king for his friend" (Prov. xxii, 11). To such pure souls, God manifests His special favors. The pure Judith, fortified by the strength of God, slew with her own hands the haughty Holofernes, the high commander of the Assyrian forces, who defied the might of the God of Israel.

With firm confidence in Him who is the strength of the weak, she fearlessly marched into the camp of the enemy before the walls of Bethulia and cut off the head of the impious general. Thus she became the deliverer of Israel and the saviour of her people because she loved purity. "For thou hast done manfully and thy heart has been strengthened because thou hast chastity" (Judith xv, 11). Even the most corrupt of nations, the ancient Romans, whose duties were fashioned after the impure creation of their hearts,

showed the highest honor to those of their daughters who embraced the virgin life in the temple. For thirty years the vestal virgins kept their watch in the temple and lived a life of celibacy. Those vestals were treated with the greatest respect, and on their appearance in the streets of the proud "Mistress of the World" public honor was shown them and even life and death were at their command; for if a criminal on his way to his doom were to meet them the hand of justice was at once withdrawn and the condemned man granted full pardon. No wonder that the Christian soul, beauteous in the spotless robe of purity, should be looked up to with admiration! No wonder that the wise man should eulogize the glory of the chaste generation. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory, for the memory of it is immortal! because it is known both with God and with man" (Wis. iv, 1). As the peerless crystal shows forth the radiance of the noonday sun, so does the chaste generation mirror the beauty of heavenly grace,

Charity exalts the soul and brings it high with each flight to the throne of God. "He that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in him" (I John iv, 16). It is the union of the soul with its Creator. It is the life of the soul. But purity is its brightest ornament and the most in harmony with its spirituality.

Man came forth from the hand of God as the paragon of earthly beings. He is the Lord and Master of the visible creation. In the beginning the Lord said His divine fiat: *Let it be*, and immediately all things in the visible universe, man alone excepted, came forth in all their beauty, each in its due course of time. But yet there was no intelligence in the world of matter; nothing reflecting the image of the Creator. Hence, as the masterpiece of His visible works, God made man. But not as the rest of earthly beings was man created. God had a higher and a nobler destiny in store for him; and He said, "Let us make man according to our own image" (Gen. i, 26). So man was brought into being with a spiritual soul, capable of knowing and loving God. It is this spiritual soul which gives him the pre-eminence in the visible creation. It elevates him above earthly things—a befitting companion for the angels. How pure, then, that heart should be which in human nature is united with that soul—the image of the Eternal.

Hence St. Paul says: "This is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor,

not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who know not God . . . for God hath not called us to uncleanness but to holiness. He, therefore, that despiseth these things despiseth not man but God; who also hath given his holy spirit in us" (I Thess. iv, 3-8). This virtue renders man like to the angels. St. Chrysostom says that the pure soul is superior to the angels by reason of the victories which it gains over the concupiscences of the flesh of which the angels have no experience. Hence Ecclesiasticus says: "A holy and shame-faced woman is grace upon grace and no price is worthy of a continent soul" (Ecclus. xxvi, 19, 20).

If the slightest touch soils the pure and dazzling brightness of the lily; if the smallest stain mars its beauty, how detestable in the sight of God must be that foul sin which disfigures the soul and defiles in it the image of its Creator! When the disobedience of our first parents brought a pall of sin and death over the fair face of the newly created universe He manifested His eternal mercy in the promise of a Redeemer. When Cain, the first murderer, purpled his hands in the blood of his innocent brother He threatened the severest doom on the hand that would slay him. The most wonderful favors of nature and of grace He lavished upon man. But no sooner did the vile sin of impurity enter the world and the children of man, forgetting the spirituality of their nature, gave themselves up to sensuality, than He repented of the work of His hands. "My spirit shall not remain in man forever because he is flesh. It repented him that he made man on the earth. And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart he said, I will destroy man from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. vi, 3-7).

The unchangeable and eternal Wisdom, touched inwardly with sorrow, repents of the work of His hands! What a monster is the demon of impurity, which so contaminated the magnificent work of creation that the divine Architect felt as it were ashamed of His work and repented that He made it! The Psalmist, in his eulogy of the handiwork of God in the universe, joyfully declares: "The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (Ps. xviii, 1). And contemplating the exaltation of man as the king of the material creation, he exclaims: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with honor and glory; and hast set him over the

works of thy hands. Thou hast subjected all things under his feet" (Ps. viii, 6-8). But the demon of impurity boastingly can say: "A little lower than the angels was man created, but I brought him down to the level of the creatures that were made to serve him. They were placed at his feet; I made him their equal. He was crowned with honor and glory; I stamped him with ignominy of sensuality. The heavens were made to show forth the glory of God; I, by lowering man for whom they were created to the mire of carnal desires, made the Creator repent of His works."

Such is the degrading vice of impurity; and to purify the world from its contaminating breath God did not confine Himself to threats. The floodgates of heaven were opened and the fountains of the great deep were let loose upon the earth until the cleansing waters rose high above the mountain tops, and every creature that did not find refuge in the ark prepared for the clean of heart perished in the flood. "In the six hundredth year of the life of Noe, in the second month in the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the floodgates of heaven were opened, . . . and the waters prevailed without measure upon the earth; and all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered . . . and all flesh was destroyed upon the earth, both of fowls and of cattle and of beasts and all creeping things that creep upon the earth; and all men. . . . And Noe only remained, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. vii, 11, etc.).

Again, when the vile sin of impurity multiplied in the impious cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, their abomination cried to heaven and God destroyed them from the face of the earth. "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Gen. xix, 24). Thus has God always shown His detestation of the foulness of impurity, which of all sins is the most degrading to our exalted human nature, made only a little lower than the angels.

But high and noble as is man from his origin—the paragon of terrestrial beings—there is a higher and a nobler reason why our hearts should be clean from every defilement of impurity. We are Christians. We are of the blood royal of the children of God; and Jesus Christ is our brother. Nay, we are one with Christ. "Know you not," says the Apostle, "that your bodies are the members of Jesus Christ?" (I Cor. vi, 15). By assuming our human nature in

His incarnation, He made us partakers of His divine nature and we are brought into the royal line of sons of God and co-heirs with Christ of His eternal kingdom.

Moreover, we are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who in the work of our sanctification has made His abode in our hearts. The Apostle reminds us of this when he says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii, 16).

What an outrage against Jesus Christ, whose members we are, to abuse those members by a sin of which the Apostle says that it should not be so much as mentioned among Christians! What a sacrilegious act to defile the temple of the Holy Ghost by such a contamination! The impious Baltassar dared to profane the holy vessels of the temple of God in Jerusalem, and immediately his doom was written by the avenging hand upon the wall. The punishment of God fell upon him, and his kingdom was given away (Dan. v). The city of Antioch in Asia Minor unhappily revolted against the good Emperor Theodosius. Forgetting the many favors which that magnanimous prince had lavished upon their city, and his unvarying kindness toward them, in the excitement of the moment, the revolvers, giving themselves up to the frenzy of madness, tore the statues of the emperor from their pedestals and dragged them through the mire amid the jeers of the excited populace. But the time of reckoning came. The frenzy of the moment subsided; the storm of passion died away; and the people of Antioch, realizing that they were guilty of treason, gave way to fear and trembling at the thought of the awful moment of retribution. And to escape the terrible chastisement which would avenge the insulted dignity of the emperor the inhabitants in hurried flight left the city, which in a few hours became still and silent as the grave. Such was the horror inspired in the hearts of the people of Antioch for the indignity offered to the majesty of their emperor in outraging his images. What, then, should be the horror of the Christian at offering an infinitely greater indignity to the majesty of the Most High by the sin of impurity, which defiles His sacred image and destroys the work of His creation, by transforming the temple of the Holy Ghost—the dwelling-place of the Holy Trinity—to a veritable den of sensuality and the abode of demons.

The prophet Ezechiel being rapt in a vision, and peering through

the mysterious wall which concealed the crimes of the House of Israel, saw the abominations which desecrated the holy city. "And he said to me: Son of man, dost thou see, thinkest thou what these are doing, the great abominations the house of Israel committeth here, that I should depart far off from my sanctuary? . . . And I went in and saw, and behold, every form of creeping things, and of living creatures, the abomination, and all the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the wall all round about. And seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel stood in the midst of them that stood before the pictures; and every one had a censer in his hand; and a cloud of smoke went up from the incense" (Ezech. viii, 6, 10, 11). The Lord God of Israel, who in the beginning, in the days before the flood, repented of the work of His creation, because man, the masterpiece of His earthly works, became impure, now complains to the prophet of the abominations which are desecrating His sanctuary. And He will no longer have patience with them, but chastise them in His wrath. "Therefore, I also will deal with them in my wrath; my eyes shall not spare them, neither will I show mercy; and when they shall cry to my ears with a loud voice I will not hear them" (Ezech. viii, 18).

Behold the heart which is impure. Peer into it, as did the prophet into the hidden recesses of the House of Israel; and a more corrupt abomination will meet your gaze—the abomination of impurity. And the God of heaven sees His sanctuary desecrated in that heart and His image destroyed in that soul.

Preserve your heart pure, then, as the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. Let its doors be closed to everything that would rob you of that purity which belongs to you by nature as the most perfect of God's terrestrial works, which belongs to you as a Christian—a member of the mystic body of Christ; and which belongs to you as the temple of the Holy Ghost, wherein He dwells by the work of sanctification.

But to do this we may indeed say, like St. Paul, in all humility: Of myself I can do nothing. The war we have to wage is a formidable one. We are opposed not by earthly powers; but, as the Apostle tells us, by the principalities of the powers of darkness, by the legions of fallen angels, who, although fallen, are still terrible in their angelic might, and who are bent upon our spiritual ruin. We have also to contend with a deadly enemy within us; we have to war

with the concupiscences of the flesh—that mortal enemy of our fallen human nature of which St. Paul says: “I see another law in my numbers fighting against the law of mind.”

We must, then, armor ourselves with the power of God, so that, with the Apostle, we can say with all confidence: “I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.” This armor of God is prayer and the Sacraments. Make use of those powerful weapons before which the enemies of our soul must fall down harmless and acknowledge themselves vanquished; and thus will you fight this good fight and gain the crown of glory which God has in store for those who serve Him with a clean heart.

XX. EXTRAVAGANCE, GAMBLING, AND THEFT

BY THE REV. FRANCIS M. HARVEY

"Be not anxious for goods unjustly gotten, for they shall not profit thee in the day of calamity and revenge. For confusion and repentance is upon a thief."—Eccles. v, 10.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Vast material wealth a characteristic of our day. Increase of extravagant and luxurious living a consequence. Those within the Church infected as well as those without. This creates an atmosphere destructive to the sense of justice.

II. God's commandment "Thou shalt not steal," as binding as ever. The fact that we are deaf to its voice is no excuse. The first step in the downward path, extravagance, as surely a preparation for injustice, for theft, as immodest words and thoughts are forerunners of debauchery.

III. Young men led into habits of extravagance by the life about them. The injustice thus wrought their parents. The effect on their own character. Young women also guilty. Special dangers of this vice to girls. Parents often responsible because of their extravagance in dressing young children. More spent on children's clothing than on clothing of parents. Extravagance dangerous to society, as well as to the individual. Affects the great middle class on whose well-being the body-politic depends. The individual is made selfish by it. His seeming kindness misleading. He is not even just.

IV. Springing from this extravagant temper we have a whole race of men living by their wits. Shady business schemes, within the law of men, but contrary to the law of God. Reputable business men, more and more on their guard against employees addicted to gambling. Gambling and theft one. The gradual development of an extravagant youth to a convicted thief. The widespread street gambling an offense and a menace.

V. Different kinds of theft—dishonest tradesmen, children who steal from their parents. Fraudulent workmen. Employers who swindle their employees. Our guiding principle—justice works spiritual death. Scripture warnings on this point. Catholics' duty to condemn extravagance, gambling and all forms of injustice. Remember the debt we owe to the Saviour who redeemed us.

Our day is characterized by the rapid increase of material wealth. For the first time in history the accumulation of wealth has become a science. We do not mean to complain of this increase. Like all of God's gifts, wealth, even great wealth, is beneficent, and is the outpouring of that same fatherly goodness that bestows upon us spiritual grace.

There is, however, an unhappy result of this great wealth; the vast increase of luxurious living. And not only is this among the

very rich, but among those that are far below in the social scale. Self-indulgence has become an almost universal social law. Vast sums are spent on mere eating and drinking. You hear men eagerly discussing the discovery of some new place at which some special delicacy may be secured. Men now compete with one another in the splendor or novelty of their entertainments. Immense sums are expended for woman's dress; large fortunes are made by those who cater to public amusement, and a great army of entertainers are supported in every city.

Unfortunately this luxurious temper is far from being confined to those outside the Church. Many who profess the Gospel of the Crucified contradict the principles of that Gospel in their daily lives, and the result is that we live in an atmosphere of pollution wherein the poison of extravagant living, with its deadly evils, is drawn into our blood, and a degenerate race is reared up to be a menace to society and a blot on our civilization.

This mad thirst for enjoyment it is that leads so many of our young people into extravagance and its attendant evils. We will confine ourselves to the consideration of one of the sad results of this pleasure-loving spirit of our day, the violation of the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal"; a commandment which comes to us now partly drowned by sounds of revelry, the cries of a degenerate commercialism and the platitudes of the worldly wise. But the commandment was first given amid the thunders of Sinai, and in the ear of God and of God's Church those thunders are still echoing, and, as of old, sound a warning anathema to the sinner. Heaven and earth may pass away, may change from age to age in their passing, but not one syllable of God's law shall pass, not one jot of His penalties shall fail.

The first step in this downward path is extravagance—very venial in appearance, like all first wrongward steps—but condemned by the sure instinct that is in every uncorrupted heart. Extravagance prepares the way for thievery, just as surely as immodest words and words of double meaning are the forerunners of debauchery. It begets the feverish longing for money, which is the spirit of gambling, and gambling is in reality an ambition to get something for nothing, and finds its ultimate, legitimate expression in common theft.

If we would purify society of this vice we must set our faces strongly against this spirit of extravagance that obtains so largely

to-day. How many a young man, fascinated by the pleasure-seeking life about him, is lured to spiritual and to social destruction! He begins by spending more than he can afford upon dress, theater-going, food and drink, and the myriad indulgences that entice on every side. To pay for these luxuries he must retrench expenditures that duty demands of him. His contribution to the support of home is minimized indefinitely, those who should be nearest and dearest to him may be in want of many little comforts, even of certain necessities, which ordinarily it would be in his power and should be his pleasure to supply; but the spirit of extravagance has transformed his generosity into selfishness and his sense of duty into an irritation at all restraint. This irritation renders himself and those about him wretched, and estranges him more and more from home and its salutary influences. Yet he who sins in this way will deny that he sins at all. He will not open his eyes to the injustice of which he is guilty. He forgets that he owes a debt to his parents that even his best efforts can never adequately repay. Under God they have given him the gift of physical life, have toiled that he might be fitted for his position in society, have denied themselves many comforts for his sake, have year by year piled up a debt against him which they would be the last to demand, but which he should be the first to pay.

What is true of a large number of young men is equally true of many young women and with even sadder results. Extravagance in dress is not even regarded as a venial offense in morals. It masquerades under the name of "a proper pride," "decent regard for appearances," "self-respect," or any of the well-sounding phrases with which we cover our follies and our sins. How many bitter heart-burnings are caused by the extravagant girl? How her selfish indulgence grows by what it feeds upon, and ill-temper gains more and more possession of her character. Happy is she if her moral sense does not become blunted, and she wake to find that her extravagance and love of display have not yet led her into the path of sordid worldliness, whence there is little hope of returning.

Much of the sorrow and heart-burning that arise in a family from the spendthrift habits of youths and maidens would have been saved parents had the children been properly trained. It is no uncommon thing—indeed, it is in some places almost the rule—to find more money lavished on the clothing of children than is spent on that of the parents. People in ordinary circumstances deem it

proper to dress their children as though they were the offspring of the wealthy. What wonder if these children learn to look down upon their fellows who are less splendidly arrayed; if pride and vanity grow up rankly in their hearts; if thus are reared generations of degenerate men and frivolous women.

Extravagance is one of the most insidious and most dangerous foes to character and to society. Society is built upon thrift. The careful toiler, industrious in his life, temperate in his manners, is the main trunk of the tree of civilization, supporting and sustaining the branches of science and the fair foliage of refinement and art. Let extravagance eat its way into the trunk, and the whole tree sickens and dies. The individual who becomes tainted with extravagance is in a fit condition to catch any of the moral diseases that afflict mankind. Extravagance, as we are considering it, is an unreasonable expenditure of money, a going beyond the bounds laid down by common sense, duty to our fellows, and the law of God. To push aside reason as the guiding principle in one department of our lives opens the way to its expulsion from all the others. The vice, too, looks so fair, appeals so strongly to our self-love, and so quickly wins the applause of the unthinking, masquerading in the garb of generosity and kindliness, that one is loath to part with it. But if you note carefully the extravagant man, you will find that he is not really generous, nor kind; he is not even just. His expenditures are upon himself, his follies and his foibles. In his commercial dealings he is always hard or mean, and often tricky and unjust. Extravagance is a form of selfishness, and the man who is most freehanded in catering to his own enjoyments, usually has an abundance of unpaid bills to his account.

Here is where extravagance becomes a breach of the Seventh Commandment. Right reason and morality demand that we pay our debts promptly and meet our obligations to the best of our ability. Extravagance is by its very nature opposed to right reason, and its presence blights our sense of justice and gives us essentially the same outlook upon life as that possessed by the gamester and the thief.

This view-point which it gives us, this atmosphere which it creates, is most dangerous. The life of extravagant luxury, that is more rife to-day than ever before in the world's history, has given us a whole race of men who are living by their wits, as it is called. Get-rich-quick schemes are a feature of every-day life. What are

called questionable business methods—a euphemism for thievery—are scarcely noticed. Practical bribery and corruption support a great horde of these same ingenious gentlemen. And this class is not condemned by public opinion as were the banditti and adventurers of old whose descendants they are. Our whole social structure is infested with these vermin that make our laws their protection. They are able to commit the most flagrant dishonesty, and yet stand legally absolved. They can do whatever is criminally wrong that has profit in it, and do it so skilfully that legal measures are powerless against them. As has been truly said, “Men profess but little esteem for the blunt, necessitous thief who robs and runs away; but for the gentleman who can break the whole of God’s law so adroitly as to leave man’s unbroken, who can indulge in such conservative stealing that his fellowmen award him a rank among honest men for the excessive skill of his dishonesty, there are ample opportunities for following the ways of the gay and extravagant.”

This gambling spirit, raised by the luxury and extravagance of present life, is growing steadily more powerful. Reputable business men are forced to be more and more on their guard against it in their employees. The questions asked of young aspirants to good business positions are becoming most particular as regards the presence of the vice of gambling, while a known fondness for card-playing and races will shut a man out of positions of trust, no matter how high the bonds by which he is guaranteed. We can not call the managers of our business houses fanatics; can not claim that they are animated by quixotic moral ideals. It is not “some far off divine event” that they look to, and in whose name they strive to shut their doors against those tainted with the gambling tendency, but the hard, practical realization that the gambler and the thief are one, and that it is but a question of time before the gamester is behind prison bars or a fugitive from justice.

See by what necessary links this spirit of extravagance and gambling are connected. The young man of extravagant tastes borrows to supply the supposed needs of the present hour. Soon his wages are pledged from week to week and from month to month. By and by the loan office is his only willing creditor. Now the burden of debt grows almost unbearable and he strives to shift it by delays, by lying excuses, by false promises. He learns all the low tricks of concealment and evasion that are used to avoid the payment of honest debt. The mind becomes fevered with winding schemes and

projects, the heart polluted, the conscience befouled. Perhaps the races will help him out, some one suggests. Stories of brilliant fortunes made in a day dazzle him. Here is an opportunity to throw off the burden of debt, to feel he can look honest men in the face—and for the moment he acknowledges that he is not honest himself—but above all, to continue in that primrose path for which he has sacrificed his honor. He plays the races—his last dollar is gone, the fever of the game is in his blood, the dread of ruin is before him; he must play now, he says. He borrows desperately, with lies of wonderous ingenuity. His mind is filled with dreams of suddenly acquired wealth; he broods over scheme after scheme of unlawful gain—timidly, perhaps, at first, but with increasing boldness, till he looks at dishonesty face to face, and thinks only of safety. Many examples of brilliant, undetected fraud, of knavery covered by cunning and crowned by success, come to his mind. Closer and closer he draws to the siren of dishonor. His judgment is warped by what he considers his pressing necessities; his imagination is on fire with the promised enjoyment of successful achievement, and he finally compromises with his conscience; says he will not steal but will borrow some of the funds entrusted to his care. A new horde of lying expedients must now be resorted to. Accounts are falsified; wrong entries made; false papers are made out and filed; perjured oaths are given, and the stream of gold begins to flow freely and sweeps him on in its intoxicating flood, on to the rapids of ruin and of shame. There are waking moments of nightmare anguish, of frenzied hope that some benignant fortune will stretch a hand to pluck him from this maelstrom of dishonor. He takes desperate risks at cards and at the races, but inevitable exposure and degradation follow him and at last he stands exposed, a detected thief, a man who has been false to himself, false to his trust, false to his God.

This is not an isolated case. Scarce a sun rises but this sad drama is re-enacted. With a persistency that is appalling, the game is played by some new fool who puts his puny ingenuity against the tried wisdom and shrewdness of human society.

But this is not all. Are you aware how this spirit of gambling permeates every walk of life? Not only are our cities pitted with pool-rooms and secret gambling dens, but gambling is open, flaunting itself on our very streets. Is there no one to raise a voice against this street corner gambling that disgraces our Sunday mornings?

The way to Mass too often lies through a crowd of young men who are disgracing themselves and the day by throwing dice or indulging in one of the many ingenious forms of corner gambling. God knows they are in need of the grace of attending Mass and instruction, but the call of the dice-box is in their blood, and the sound of the church bell falls silent before it. There they play with the wages that should go to the support of those at home, gambling away, perhaps, the comforts and necessities of aged parents, gambling away the promise of their early manhood, gambling away their hope of future success, gambling away the safety of their immortal souls.

Of open direct theft much need not be said. Its heinousness is fairly well recognized. What needs to be thoroughly insisted upon, is that sinful extravagance and gambling are of a piece with theft as surely as impure words and impure thoughts are of a piece with the most flagrant violations of the Sixth Commandment.

But theft is not always open and direct. How often in the day is God's commandment broken by the dishonest tradesman who gives short weight, or who charges exorbitant prices? How many children pilfer from their parents, and how many parents make light of such pilfering, forgetful that the child is a criminal in the sight of God! "He that stealeth anything from his father, or from his mother, and saith, This is no sin, is the partner of a murderer." How often do we see workmen shirking their work, or doing it with wilful negligence? They sell eight hours of labor and give five or six. What are such men but thieves, who are bound before the tribunal of God's justice. This is a condition of affairs that is becoming appalling common. It seems that the better are the terms obtained by labor the more prevalent grows this theft of time and service. Men selfishly disregard the interests of the employer to whose service they have bound themselves: but call to mind the saying of St. Luke: "He that is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is greater. If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

On the other hand, we have those who defraud the workmen of their rightful wages, taking advantage of their necessity or ignorance to cheat them into an agreement to work for less than their labor is worth; who make an unnecessary delay in paying their wages or defraud them entirely. These are "sins that cry to heaven for vengeance."

Our guiding principle, in regard to this most solemn command of the Most High, is that whatever works an injustice to our neighbor, that defrauds, circumvents, or takes advantage of him in any way, is an offense against him, and against God, and binds us absolutely to restitution.

The Sacred Scriptures ring with repeated warnings against injustice, fraud and theft. "This is the curse that goeth forth over the earth; for every thief shall be judged as is there written. I will bring forth this curse, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall come to the house of the thief; and it shall remain in the midst of his house and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof." "You do wrong and defraud. . . . Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God?" "Be not anxious for goods unjustly gotten, for they shall not profit thee in the day of calamity and revenge—for confusion and repentance is upon a thief." Again and again we are reminded that our God is the God of justice and will suffer no infringement of His law to go unpunished. Again and again sounds the solemn warning to fly fraud and iniquitous dealing. Like all the stern commands of God they spring from His Fatherly love of us. He is jealous for His children with a holy, paternal jealousy; demanding what is best for them, and resenting any loss of their truth and worth. He created us for Himself, that our hearts might find joy and rest in Him. What room is there for God in that heart which is filled with restless longing for the things of earth, so filled, that loss of honor is deemed a small thing if but the craving for earthly possessions be satisfied?

Let us remember that it is our duty as Catholics not only to set ourselves sternly against all cheating, bribery and swindling—that is expected even of the heathen—but to be outspoken in our condemnation of the extravagant luxury of our day, and the spirit of gambling that is ripe in our land. What have we, who were purchased by the Passion and the Cross of the Man of Sorrows and of Poverty to do with softness and effeminacy, with the heedless extravagance which makes a god of self whilst Jesus in the person of His poor is dying at our gates, with the fevered excitement and desperate longing of the gambling den, or the secret thief whose "sins cry to heaven for vengeance"? Let us kneel in spirit before that Cross, see the price that has been paid for us, realize the heavy debt that lies upon us, and strive to pay some small portion of that debt by scrupulous regard to all the claims of God's justice.

XXI. CHEATING, USURY, AND THE PAYMENT OF JUST DEBTS

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your field, which by fraud has been kept back by you; and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth."—James v, 3, 4.

SYNOPSIS.—*Cheating.*—Subject-matter of this sermon has to do with the important virtue of justice. What its practise consists in. Strong denunciations of injustice in Holy Writ, e. g., Deut. xxvii.

Theft.—Can be committed in other ways than by robbing a man's pocket or till. Modern society overrun with fraudulent persons. Persons, otherwise good, will not hesitate to cheat in business. Excuses made will not avail with God. Small frauds can mount up till mortal sin is reached. Seriousness of obligation of restitution.

Usury.—Usury a special form of unjust dealing. Definition. Forbidden by the Church. Why so? Explanation of the apparent difference between the Church's discipline in this matter in ancient and modern times. No real change of principle on part of the Church. Difference due to change of character of money, once unproductive; now productive. Interest lawful because of loss involved in putting out capital. Interest still and always unlawful, if charged on consideration merely of loan. Modern usurers do this, because they charge far more than would compensate them for loss; they take advantage of necessities of applicants. In this they are like usurers of ancient times. Interest must be moderate.

Payment of Just Debts.—Non-payment of just debts also a sin against justice. Different classes of debtors. Those who do not hope nor intend to pay. Those who are imprudent. Heavy obligation of restitution incurred. Debtors through misfortune. Their duties. Exhortation of the Apostle.—I Thess. iv, 3-6.

Dear brethren in Jesus Christ, the subject-matter of my discourse to-day has to do with one of the most important of those virtues which belong to the Christian life, and which we are bound to practise if we are to save our immortal souls. It has to do with the virtue of justice. The practise of justice consists in rendering to others that which is due to them, that which, upon any count, we owe them. From the nature of things it also involves abstinence from any act that would deprive another of his just rights.

That this virtue is a most important one, the practise of which is strictly binding, and sin against which is a most serious matter, is clear from the terrible denunciation of one form of injustice con-

tained in the strong words of the text that I have just quoted to you. And that is not the only text of Holy Scripture in which injustice is denounced. In more places than can be enumerated here, the punishments of God are threatened against those who are guilty of any form of injustice or oppression; while in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, the Holy Lawgiver Moses, announcing God's law to His people, classes the defrauder of others with those guilty of most heinous crimes, and calls down upon them a like curse with that pronounced against adulterers, murderers and the incestuous.

One of the sins against the virtue of justice is theft. A man guilty of this crime is rightly looked upon with aversion as a dangerous person, hurtful to society. But, dear brethren, one form of theft is cheating—one of the sins about which I am to address you. Now there is many a man, reputed a respectable member of the community, who would be most indignant at the suggestion that he would be capable of common theft, of putting his hand into another man's pocket, or robbing his till, yet who is a greater criminal by far than some poor fellow who is dragging out weary years in prison.

There are more ways than one of stealing the property of others, and it is not always the man who breaks into your house that is the biggest thief. You know, only too well, how our modern society is overrun with defrauders of every kind; the millionaire who has become rich by fraudulent speculation; the company promoter who lures the unwary to entrust to him their hard-earned competence with which they had hoped to make secure a happy evening to their lives of toil; the commercial men who make huge profits by the sale of adulterated commodities, ruining not only the pockets but the health of those who buy of them; the employers of laborers who take advantage of the wide-spread poverty and the pressing necessities of the poor to extort from them hard labor—labor that costs not only the sweat of their brows but their very life blood—at far less than that living wage that is the just right of everyone who is willing to work for it—all these, dear brethren, are in reality thieves; yes, and more than thieves—oppressors, tyrants, and even murderers.

So, too, many who cheat upon a smaller scale are not free from the same reproach. The store-keeper who sells under weight; the employee who scamps his work; every man who deludes people by

means of false advertisements in which lying statements are made as to the quality of the goods or the services which he offers to the public—all these are thieves; for he who obtains money or any other valuable by cheating, is a thief, and guilty of sin, more or less grave, according to the amount of which another is deprived, against the virtue of justice.

It is a strange thing, dear brethren, that persons otherwise good, attentive to their religious duties, good husbands and fathers, good wives or sons or daughters, will so easily excuse themselves in regard to fraudulent dealings of one kind or another. "It is business," they say: "we must do it to live;" "without some sharp practise we should starve;" "everyone does it, so we must do it." Dear brethren, such excuses may satisfy the world, they will not pass with Almighty God, who is justice itself. If we must give an account of every idle word, so too must we give a strict account of every smaller sum of which we have by any means whatsoever defrauded another. And it is to be remembered that, although in other cases no number of venial sins will mount up to constitute mortal sin, yet in the matter of defrauding another of property, a point is arrived at when the amount thus unjustly obtained has reached a notable sum, and restitution of the ill-gotten gain becomes binding under pain of mortal sin, though each single act of injustice was not more than a venial sin.

There is only one way, dear brethren, for a true Christian: and that is strict honesty in all dealings with others. Not only is dishonesty of any kind a sin; not only is it frequently a mortal sin; but also it involves, when by dishonesty others have been deprived of their goods, a binding obligation to restore; an obligation which many are not willing to carry out, though to some extent they regret their sin, an obligation which, in such cases, remains unfulfilled to the end, and is the cause of eternal damnation.

Usury

There is a particular form of unjust dealing known by the name of usury, that in all ages has been an instrument of oppression in the hands of the unscrupulous rich, and a real curse to the poor and needy. Strictly speaking, usury is the taking of interest for a loan, and upon the sole consideration of the loan, without regard to any other circumstance than that of the loan itself. This has

ever been forbidden and condemned by the Catholic Church. By the rules of justice, by the natural law of justice written upon the heart of man, no one is bound to restore anything beyond that which he has borrowed, unless some consideration enters in other than the mere fact of something having been lent. Let me endeavor to make this clear: for it is necessary for us Catholics to be able to refute an unjust charge that is made against the Church of having forsaken her original principles in this matter; of having been forced to forsake them because she had reluctantly to admit that they became out of date. Having maintained, say her opponents, that all interest whatever on a loan of money is against justice and the law of God, she now permits interest to be received. The Church has not altered her principles. It is still her principle that the obligations of justice are satisfied when just that which was borrowed has been returned, and that to demand more, apart from other considerations than that of the loan, is a sin against justice. Surely this is an elementary truth of common sense! If I lend a man something that I am not using myself, he has fulfilled his obligation when he has returned it. But other considerations may come in. Things lent are divisible into two classes: those which are continually productive and those which are unproductive. If I lend a man something which, while I have it in my possession, is of no profit to me, does not produce any sort of increment; the temporary absence of which from my keeping causes me no loss whatever, I have no just cause for demanding anything beyond the return of my property intact. Now in former days, when communication was difficult, when commerce was restricted, *money* answered to this description. It was unproductive. A man locked up his money in the strongbox, and there it stayed till he wanted to spend it. If he lent it, whether for a long or short period, he lost nothing thereby. Under these circumstances there was no just reason for charging interest upon loans. Those who did so, and many did, took advantage of the necessities of the borrower. They demanded interest, not because their money, in their own hands, would have been used for the extension of their trade, or have been put into some great business firm where it would continually have produced profit; but because the poor wretches who applied to them were in such need that they could not refuse the most extortionate demand. Under such circumstances who can wonder that the Church forbade usury, as indeed, Holy Scripture had forbidden it from the earliest

times of Jewish history? But in later times, owing to the vastly increased facility of communication between one country and another, owing also to the extension and combination of great trading companies which followed upon those extended facilities, money has in reality changed its character. It is no longer unproductive, but productive. With capital, a man can become, as a shareholder, a member of some great business concern, and his money will earn other money. In this state of things you will easily see that a man who lends money to another is depriving himself of the increment which that money would produce if employed in one of the thousand and one ways that are available in modern times. He has a right, therefore, to be indemnified for the loss of this increment, consequent upon his lending his money; and he is indemnified by the interest which he charges. This the Church acknowledges, but she does not thereby recede one step from the principle that, apart from such loss, apart from circumstances *other* than the mere fact of lending, interest may not be charged. In other words, she does not permit a man to charge merely for lending, for the Divine Master has commanded us not only to lend, but also to give to those in need; but she does permit him to charge for the loss he sustains in the present condition of society, by divesting himself for a time of some of his fortune. Should money again become unproductive, the Church would again forbid interest on loans, and would do it without any alteration of the principle to which she has held all through.

But, dear brethren, if interest is lawful, it must be moderate; it must be proportionate to the loss sustained by the temporary deprivation of capital sustained by the lender. What is to be said of the extortionate interest charged by modern usurers? They, like all who in old days charged interest, pay themselves far beyond anything that they lose, taking advantage of the pressing necessities of those who are unfortunately driven to apply to them. "Blessed is he," says the Psalmist, "that considereth the poor and needy: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day" (Ps. xli, 1), and, "By reason of the misery of the needy, and the groans of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord." Far from the modern usurer will be the blessing of which the Psalmist speaks. For him the evil day will assuredly come, when God Himself will demand that satisfaction which human laws are not always able to enforce, and which interested legislators prefer should not be enforced.

Payment of Just Debts

Another way in which very many in our times fall short of the demands of the Christian virtue of justice is by failure to pay just debts. Sometimes it is of set purpose that a man accumulates debts that he neither expects to be able to pay nor has any intention of paying. This is, indeed, a heinous form of robbery. By indulging in this practise a man hangs a heavy chain about him; for he is bound to restore what he acquires in this way, and, even if he became honest and worked for his living, it might take him a lifetime to fulfill his obligation of restitution.

Others there are who are merely imprudent and careless. They mean to pay; they hope to pay; but their hopes are ill-founded. They base their expectations of future affluence upon speculations of a dubious kind, or upon great things that they are some day to accomplish. Such imprudence and carelessness are frequently most culpable. A man knows all the time that he has no right to be contracting debts upon such slight security; yet, so long as he can obtain credit, he goes on obtaining goods for which he is never likely to have the power of paying.

The contracting of debts, dear brethren, whether with the intention of not paying them, or with culpable rashness and imprudence, is a sin for which men will have to answer at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. How much suffering and misery are not these men responsible for; suffering to those to whom they owe money; suffering to their own families, disgrace and even destitution to those dependent upon them, when at last the evil day comes and their long-suffering creditors will wait no longer! Let Christian parents, and all who have charge of the young, point out to them how entirely contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ is such a practise; and warn them against the inducements that traders will often hold out to persuade them to purchase things that are both needless to them and beyond their means.

Lastly, dear brethren, there is the case of those who have got into debt merely through misfortune and necessity. In order not to sin against the virtue of justice, such must have a sincere intention to pay their just debts, and must use every endeavor to do so, avoiding all unnecessary expenses that would interfere with the fulfilment of so strict an obligation. Acting in this way, they will not fall under the strong denunciations pronounced against all

who are guilty of wilful fraud—fraud which, even though human laws can not always punish it, will be visited with grievous chastisement by Him who has said to us by the mouth of the Apostle, “This is the will of God, your sanctification . . . and that no man overreach, nor circumvent his brother in business: because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified” (I Thess. iv, 3-6).

XXII. RESTITUTION

BY THE REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.S.S.R.

"If I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."—Luke xix, 8.

SYNOPSIS.—Conversion of Zacheus—worthy of imitation.

I. The obligation of restitution. Its extent; when light; when under pain of grievous sin. Not a penance imposed at confession, but a strict obligation of justice. Its wilful neglect entails forfeiture of salvation.

II. Who must make restitution?

III. What must be restored?

IV. To whom must restitution be made? Anecdote of St. Francis of Paul.

V. When must restitution be made? Anecdote.

VI. How to make restitution?

VII. Who is excused from making restitution?

Exhortation.—1, to honesty; 2, to restore; 3, not to contract debts, to pay just debts; anecdote; 4, to fidelity and honesty in little things; and 5, not to sell one's soul for unjust possessions.

When our divine Saviour was passing through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem, where a few days later He was to die the infamous death of the Cross for our redemption, a rich tax-collector, named Zacheus, was very anxious to see the great Prophet, of whom he had heard such wonderful things. But as he was of short stature, and an immense multitude surrounded Our Lord, he was not able to get even a glimpse of Him from afar. His great eagerness to see Jesus, however, enabled him to devise an ingenious plan to satisfy his curiosity. He ran ahead of the crowd that accompanied the Saviour, and climbed up a tree near the road where Jesus was to pass. When Our Lord drew near the place where Zacheus had stationed himself, He looked up and bade him come down at once from the tree, and invited Himself to spend the day at his house. Zacheus obeyed with great joy, and brought Jesus to his house, entertained Him and His disciples, and attentively listened to His every word. He felt so happy and so greatly benefited by the kind visit and edifying words of the Lord, that he said to Him in the presence of the crowds that had gathered at his house: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold." The conversion of

Zacheus, hitherto so covetous and so attached to earthly goods, was genuine, for he proved it by his willingness to part, during his lifetime, with half of his wealth in works of charity, and especially by his sincere resolution at once to restore four times the amount of the wrong he had done to his fellow-men. Hence our divine Saviour, on hearing his determination, exclaimed: "To-day is salvation come to this house" (Luke xix, 9).

We do not read in the Gospel that the example of Zacheus was followed by many. It is a deplorable fact that it is not more generally followed by Christians. Generous almsgiving, even among wealthy Catholics, is far from being a general practise, and a prompt, full and adequate restitution of goods unjustly acquired, of the damage perpetrated against the neighbor's property, is of still rarer occurrence. And yet such restitution is of so strict an obligation, that when the injustice committed suffices to constitute a mortal sin, the wilful neglect or refusal of restitution leads to eternal perdition.

I. When the injury done to the neighbor's goods or property is only slight, the obligation of restitution binds only under the pain of venial sin; but if the injury is serious, the obligation of indemnifying the neighbor is binding under pain of grievous sin, of eternal damnation, and this obligation endures until restitution has been made. It is a grievous sin to wrong an extremely poor person of even a quarter of a dollar, a very poor person of half a dollar, a laboring person of a dollar, a tradesman of an amount equal to a day's wages, persons in good circumstances, the wealthy, of five or more dollars. It is not only necessary to confess the sin, but also to make full restitution under pain of forfeiting one's salvation. No man can have a right, a claim to take or keep what belongs to another; no man may enrich himself or better his circumstances with what does not belong to him, for such things claim their lawful owners, and must be restored to them.

Restitution is not a penance imposed by the confessor, but a strict obligation of justice, from which no confessor may dispense. "No sin," says St. Antoninus, "is more dangerous than the sin of injustice; to be forgiven other sins, we need only confess them with sincere sorrow and firm purpose to commit them no more; but there is no forgiveness of the sin of injustice without restitution; and without it prayer and acts of penance are of no avail for salvation." Ill-gotten goods must, therefore, be restored, the damage done to our neighbor must be repaired, as far as lies in our power, otherwise

God will not forgive us, for, says St. Augustine, "he who does not make the necessary restitution when he is able, does not perform, but feigns or shams penance, because the sin is not remitted, unless the object taken be restored." He who has wronged his neighbor and will not, when he is able, indemnify him, cannot be forgiven by any confessor, or by any bishop, or by the Pope, or even by God Himself. "God," says the learned and eloquent Bourdaloue, "has imparted to His ministers on earth an almost boundless power. They may dispense from the ecclesiastical laws, absolve from the heaviest censures, commute vows, free from oaths, forgive the most enormous sins, and open heaven to the greatest sinners. But they are powerless to dispense from the obligation of restitution; nay, even God Himself does not claim this power. He who has committed an injustice and will not, though able, make restitution, cannot be forgiven by God Himself or be dispensed from this obligation by anyone but by the injured party. If he who refuses to make the necessary restitution were to go to confession and receive absolution, the absolution would be worthless and his confession would be a horrid sacrilege.

God easily forgives the sins committed against Himself, but will not pardon those who refuse to make restitution. If a man has made a vow to God to donate a large sum of money to build a church, and had not yet made restitution of his ill-gotten goods, he would first be obliged to make restitution before he could be allowed to fulfill his vow; and if he were to refuse to make restitution, his vowed and proffered donation would be an abomination to the Lord, and would not keep him out of hell after his death. Therefore, he who has been guilty of injustice toward his neighbor, and is able to repair it and indemnify his neighbor, must either restore or be doomed to the endless torments of hell! There is no other alternative!

II. Who is bound to make restitution? Among those who are bound in conscience to make restitution are the following: Those who have stolen from, cheated or swindled their neighbor; who have in any way helped or abetted others in so doing; who have failed properly to care for, defend or protect goods entrusted to their charge; who have wilfully damaged or destroyed their neighbor's property; who are, in any way, dishonest in their work, *v. g.*, wasting their time instead of working, doing poor work, furnishing poorer material than was agreed upon; who, in any way, wrong public or private firms or corporations; who fail to pay their em-

ployees their just wages; who carry on unjust lawsuits; who charge exorbitant prices for their services or their goods; who fraudulently go into bankruptcy; who have inherited or acquired unjust possessions; who by so-called "smart business transactions" do wrong to their neighbor; who neglect paying their just debts, or contract debts they know they are unable to pay; who have found objects of value, and know the owner, and do not give them to him; or who, not knowing the owner, make no earnest effort to discover him; and the like.

III. *What* must be restored? The object itself, if it is still in a good state; or if not, an equally good and similar object, or its full value; and besides this, the natural fruits of the object and the full amount of the loss, if any, incurred by the owner, for the owner has a strict and just claim to be indemnified to the full extent of the loss or damage resulting from the injustice committed against him; and this, according to the law of God: "If it were taken away by stealth, he shall make the loss good to the owner" (Exod. xxii, 12). If several persons have together committed the injustice, each one must restore his share; if the others refuse or fail to restore their share, the remaining, one or more, are bound to restore all. The helper or abettor must restore, if the culprit himself does not, for he has co-operated in the injustice committed. Those who have, in any way, acquired stolen goods, must, if they were in bad faith, that is, if they knew them to have been stolen, restore *all* that they acquired, or the value thereof; if they acquired them in good faith, that is, did not know that they had been stolen, they are bound to give up only what may still be in their possession. Heirs of unjust goods must restore all. Whenever a reasonable doubt exists as to the existence or extent of the obligation of making restitution, the penitent should seek and be guided by the decision of his confessor.

IV. *To whom* must restitution be made? To the owner. If he is dead, to his lawful heirs. If neither the owner nor his heirs be known, or if their whereabouts cannot be discovered, the restitution is to be made to pious or charitable works, for instance, to orphanages, to charitable institutions, to the poor, to the Church, and the like. A merchant who has defrauded his regular customers, should restore by charging them less, or by giving them better measure, etc., until he has fully repaired his injustice toward them. As to those who have in any way wronged firms or corporations, they should make restitution to the same, unless the stock has changed hands and their

members are no longer the same; in this case, they should restore to pious or charitable works. Some persons, guilty of injustice, refuse to make restitution to the owner, under the plea that he is rich and does not need it, but are ready to give the amount in charity. This is wrong, for the object or the amount stolen, like the bell of the stolen cow of St. Medardus, which kept on ringing until the cow had been restored to him, does not cease to call for or claim its owner, until it has been restored to him. The question is not whether the owner will miss it, or needs it, but whether it belongs to him; and, if it does, it must go back to him, and to no one else. "If you would give it to the poor," says St. Ambrose, "the poor would cry out to you: 'Do not feed us with the blood of our brethren.'" Almsgiving is good, when it is a real alms; but it is a theft to give to the poor or to the Church what does not belong to you. When the aged and holy Tobias thought his death was at hand, he gave wise counsels to his son; among others, he said to him: "Give alms out of *thy* substance" (Tob. iv, 7); that is, give alms out of what belongs to you, and not out of what belongs to others. St. Francis of Paul, passing through Naples with some of his monks, was well received and greatly honored by the king. Full of admiration at the saint's holiness and miraculous powers and at the piety of his monks, the king offered to build them a convent wherever they would wish. But St. Francis replied: "Convents should be built with honest, and not with dishonesty, money." The king, surprised at such an answer, replied that there was no dishonest money in his treasury. The saint said: "You are mistaken; give me a coin, and I will show you the truth of what I say." A coin was handed him. He took it and pressed it between his fingers, and there issued from it drops of blood, trickling down to the floor. "This blood," said St. Francis, "is the blood extorted from the poor by unjust taxes; it is not fit to be used in building convents, but must be restored to those oppressed by such taxes." Hence an end must be put to dishonesty by making due restitution, before there can be question of almsgiving, or of donations for pious purposes. When, however, the owner is unknown, or his whereabouts can not be found, or there is no means whatever of reaching him, then such alms or donations are to be made simply as restitution.

V. *When* must restitution be made? Whenever it is feasible, restitution should be made *before* going to Confession, *before* receiving absolution. When this can not be done, the penitent must at

least have the sincere and earnest determination to do so at the very earliest opportunity, and, if he has not wherewith to do so, he must be firmly resolved at once to make use of the means to become soon able to restore. It not infrequently happens that, when a man confesses his acts of injustice and sincerely promises to make restitution at the first opportunity after his confession, he afterward grows careless, postpones it, and even soon changing his mind neglects it altogether, although he is well able to restore. Thus he risks forfeiting his eternal salvation. To secure their penitents against such a danger, some confessors are wont to defer absolution until restitution has actually been made by those who are able to make it, and to require those who are unable to mention the fact at every future Confession, so as to keep their obligation ever present to their minds, and thus to feel constantly urged thereby to make serious efforts to fulfil it as soon as possible.

A certain man had defrauded a party to the amount of twelve hundred dollars. He went to Confession, acknowledged his guilt and his ability and willingness to make restitution at once, received absolution and went to Holy Communion. But after this he deferred making restitution from day to day. At his next Confession he made the same acknowledgment and promise, was again absolved and received Holy Communion; but after this he again neglected to restore. The same thing happened several times, and in spite of his resolutions and promises, the injustice he had committed was still unrepaired. At last he went to Confession to a priest who would not trust his promises and assurances, but spoke to him in words of burning zeal, and positively refused to absolve him until he had made due restitution. Being thus compelled to do his duty without delay, he complied at once with his obligation, returned to Confession and was absolved. He afterward felt most grateful to that priest, called him his benefactor, and said that he owed his salvation to him, because, if he had not thus been obliged to restore before receiving absolution, he would most likely never have fulfilled this obligation and would have thus forfeited his salvation.

VI. *How* should restitution be made? He who has wronged his neighbor need not make restitution publicly or in person at the risk of his reputation. He should merely take care that the owner be fully indemnified. If he can quietly and secretly replace the

article, let him do so at the earliest opportunity. If the restitution is to be made in money, he may send it by draft, by mail, by express, either himself or through some other party; for instance, through his confessor. It very often happens that a priest is the channel whereby restitution is made. If the owner or his heirs are either unknown or can not be found or reached in any way, the penitent should be guided by the confessor's advice. If he can not restore the whole amount at once, then he should restore a little at a time. An employee may sometimes be able to make restitution by extra work.

VII. *Who is excused* from making restitution? First, he who is poor, he who has not the means of restoring, is excused as long as he is unable to restore; but if his circumstances are bettered, he is no longer excused, but must make restitution. A person is not bound to reduce himself to destitution and beggary in order to make restitution; but, at the same time, he should not, under this pretext, refuse to make it and continue to live in great style, to indulge his tastes, his love of pleasure, or to make unnecessary and superfluous expenses. Were he to do this, his salvation would be in extreme danger. Secondly, he is excused from making restitution whose injustice or debt has been freely condoned by the owner.

Experience shows that those guilty of little thefts are apt to repent and make restitution, and that those guilty of great thefts never do, but prefer to go straight to hell rather than part with their ill-gotten wealth. They, by their dishonesty, usually bring distress to numbers of poor families, sell their own soul for filthy lucre, live and die with the curse of those they have ruined, and, after leaving their unjust wealth behind them, are justly precipitated into the fire of hell for all eternity! What a sad end!

Therefore, saith the prophet, "set not thy heart upon unjust possessions, . . . for they shall be of no service in the time of vengeance" (Eccles. v, 1). Restitution is hard; yes, but an eternity of torments is not only harder, but intolerable! Hence let all who have been guilty of injustice toward their neighbor take to heart these words of our divine Saviour: "What doth it profit a man, if he were to gain the whole world," if he were to obtain possession of all the wealth of the universe, and, on account of its unjust acquisition, "he were to suffer the loss of his own soul" (Matt. xvi, 26). What a folly for a man to sell his immortal soul for

unjust goods, which he can not long enjoy, but must soon leave! Hence he who has committed acts of injustice should heed the admonition of St. Augustine: "Restore that money, lose that money, lest you lose your soul." If you make due restitution, you will secure your salvation, according to the saying of the prophet: "If the wicked man restore the pledge, and render what he has robbed, . . . he shall surely live" (Ezech. xxxiii, 15).

The neglect to pay one's lawful debts is the cause of much injustice. Do not live beyond your means; pay as you go; economize, and do not contract debts you know you will not be able to pay. This is unjust. If you have contracted debts, be sure to curtail your expenses and make every effort to pay them. Imitate the wonderful honesty of a poor French peasant. There was an annual rent of eight francs on his little property due to a man who had left the country, and whose whereabouts he did not know. For forty years he had not received any information about his creditor, and he, nevertheless, faithfully put aside every year the amount of the rent; and though during that long period he raised a large family of children and grandchildren, and though he was often in sore distress on account of sickness or failure of the crops, he would never touch the sum he put aside for his rent. At the end of the forty years his creditor's son came, in his travels, to the village and, having made himself known, was warmly received and entertained by the venerable peasant. After a frugal dinner partaken of by the whole family, the peasant brought a leather satchel from his room and poured out of it three hundred and twenty francs, the amount of the forty years' rent, and joyfully gave it to his creditor's son, feeling most happy at being able to pay his debts. His example is worthy of imitation.

In conclusion, consider the goods of your neighbor as something sacred, and beware of ever touching, damaging or appropriating any of them under any pretext whatever, for as our divine Saviour says (Luke xvi, 10), if you are unjust in little things, you will surely be unjust in matters of greater importance. All great thieves did not become such all at once, but began by dishonesty in little things. Let each one of you examine his conscience, and if he has been guilty of injustice toward his neighbor in a grievous matter, he should bear in mind that, if he does not at once make restitution, or, if this is not now in his power, if he does not earnestly exert

himself to become able to do so, he will forfeit his salvation. You have your fate for eternity in your own hands; choose wisely; do not risk your salvation for even all the wealth in the world, because "what will it profit you, if you gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of your immortal soul?"

A Discourse on Socialism will be found in Vol. I., page 392

XXIII. LYING, CALUMNY AND DETRACTION

BY THE REV. FRANCIS M. HARVEY.

"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.—The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell."—James iii, 5, 6.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—St. James on speech. A noble and ennobling gift. Our speech the image of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The "Word" reveals the Divine, which else had been hidden; our speech to reveal God's working in our souls.

I. Lying the monster evil. "White lies," a misnomer. Lies of excuse; their cowardice. Exaggerations—their source, pride. Jocular lies; their danger; cause bitterness and anger; create habit of insincerity. Perjury—what it is. A violation of justice and truth. Acted lies. Silent lies. Flattery, a subtle form of lying. The truthfulness of our Saviour as manifested in His human nature. Lying, a sin against society and an offense against God. How a sin against society. How society punishes lying. Why an offense against God. Our Saviour's truth as manifested in His Divinity.

II. Slander most hateful to God. Example of Miriam's punishment for slandering Moses. No one pleads guilty to starting the slanderous story. Consequences of slander on its victims. The slanderer a thief who can never make restitution. God's punishment of the slanderer.

III. Detraction a most common sin. Defense used by detractors. That they tell the truth is no excuse. Consequences often worse than those of slander. The false witnesses of Our Lord's trial spoke some truth. So-called "honest" people who make a virtue of retailing the faults of their neighbor. How Our Lord acted in this matter. Detraction that is acted. We should check detractors as we would the obscene. Scriptural condemnation of detractors.

Peroration.—We must keep a guard over our speech. Speech a mighty power for good and ill. The fact that speech is so common and familiar blinds us to its true import.

St. James, in his admirable epistle, gives us a graphic sketch of the good and the evil that flow from the power of speech. He reminds us how glorious is this gift in itself, how noble and ennobling, and also how dread an evil it becomes through misuse. "By it," he says, "we bless God the Father; and by it we curse men who are made after the likeness of God."

The evils that spring from a misuse of the gift of speech are many and various. We will confine ourselves to those against the Eighth Commandment, by which are forbidden all untruthfulness, insincerity, calumny and detraction.

Lying is well called the monster evil; monstrous in extent, for it

is the most prevalent of sins, monstrous in its result, for it is a direct attack upon God Himself, who is called Truth, and it is ruinous to a man's character and to his soul.

We must not deceive ourselves in regard to this vice. Any variation from the truth, or what we honestly believe to be the truth, is a lie, and is branded by the Almighty with the penalty attached to that sin, "Yes, I told a lie, but there was no harm in it." There is no such lie. Its essence is harmful, for it is contrary to God; it is, as the philosophers tell us, by its very nature the great "utterly evil" thing. A "white" lie is a whitewashed lie; its true color is necessarily black. Any word or act of ours that intentionally deceives one who has a right to know the truth is a lie, and any euphemistic expression we may attach to it, such as "white," "harmless," or "jocose," but serves to cheat us as to its true nature, and does not remove a jot of guilt from our souls. We say to children they must not tell "stories"; we should forbid them to lie. A story is something pleasant, attractive; to give its name to a thing so black and ugly as lying is in itself a lie. The Sacred Scripture uses no euphemism. Falsehoods and lies are the names used, even the milder term "untruth" does not appear. We should imitate the Word of God in our speech and call these ugly things by their ugly names.

A common form of lie is that of excuse, a combination of cowardice and folly; cowardice in that the liar fears the consequence of some act or word—which may in itself have been justifiable; folly in that he prefers to offend Almighty God rather than one of His creatures. This form of lying is recognized as the weapon of the weak, but woe to those who encourage or develop this habit in weaklings, who terrify children into the use of falsehood and subterfuge, who make a lie the only refuge from punishment of those under their charge.

Pride, too, is prolific of lies. The silly exaggeration, the pose, the ambiguous way of narrating certain of our adventures, or our actions, spring from pride, a wish to show off. Pride itself is a lie. The father of lies became such because of his pride; and the man who makes pride a dominant trait of his character is a living lie.

Lies told in jest, to raise a laugh, or to cause astonishment, is another division of this subject. Often these are not lies at all, for they do not really deceive; or at least do not deceive those who have a right to certain information. Hence they are in no way sins.

But so subtly does this poison of the serpent—the father of lies—permeate all forms of insincerity, that jocose lying is often attended with sin. The jest that holds a brother up to ridicule, that injures the reverence due to authority, that arouses anger and feelings of revenge, that induces rash swearing, or in any way dims the brightness of the golden chain of Christian fellowship is a sin against charity, and possibly against justice. To tell a jocose lie that causes terror or alarm, that puts one to serious inconvenience, or in any way pains or wounds another must be placed in the same category. Then, too, there is always the danger of acquiring the habit of lying. He who lies constantly in jest will very soon lie in earnest. The bloom is too easily rubbed from the fair fruit of honesty for us to trifle with it in any way. There are many other methods of amusing our friends, and displaying our superior wit or superabundant humor, without risking the wounding of our fellows, or the warping of our characters in the direction of sin.

The most heinous form of lying is that expressed in the wording of the Eighth Commandment, bearing false witness, or perjury. The man who enters a court of justice, and, after solemnly taking God to witness that his words are absolute truth, falsely swears away the life or character of another, or in any way defeats the end of justice, is guilty of a sin before which ordinary crime pales. He has committed a blasphemy in invoking the God of truth to father a lie; he has sinned against justice in blackening the character of his neighbor; he has added to his calumnies a publicity of scandal that it could scarcely otherwise acquire. Truly does the Scripture say that “a man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is like a dart and a sword and a sharp arrow.”

There are lies acted as well as lies spoken. The man or woman who preserves a pious exterior that their neighbors may deem them especially virtuous may be acting a lie. The look of seraphic innocence that brightens the face of the culprit when his wrong-doing is discovered, and the wrong-doer is unknown, is an acted lie. The silence that closes the lips of the guilty one when another is charged with his sin is also an offense against God's command. Any deception, in a word, that misleads, or is intended to mislead those who have a right to certain knowledge, is a lie, be that deception a word, a look, a posture, or mere silence.

A form of lying that receives little condemnation from us, yet which is most pernicious, is flattery. Its purpose is usually the

gaining of some advantage—generally popularity. It is a network of lies; words, looks and actions in subtle combination. It is most dangerous to those who receive it, and deadly to those who practise it.

Glance for a moment at the plain truthfulness and sincerity of our Divine Model, whose followers we claim to be. Note His absolute truth in all the relations of His mortal life. During His stay upon earth He came in contact with all sorts and conditions of men. With the Pharisees, who have their following to-day in a large body of apparently very good people; strict church-goers; occasional recipients of the Sacraments; ornaments—more or less—of Christian society. He met those who philosophized about religion; who dabbled in the latest thought of the day on doctrine and on ethics. He conversed with the self-opinionated lawyers; with the talented young man who looked upon himself as a genius; with the half-cynical wholly curious host who narrowly watched and freely criticized His actions at table. The impulsively pious, too, came to Him. They whose religion was a sentimental one, an affair of the emotions, wherein self-denial had no place. Yet He was the same, absolutely the same to all. The philosophers, doctors, Pharisees met the same, clear, unwavering sincerity and truth that showed mercy to the Magdalen, and gently plucked the stones from the hands of the executioners of the woman taken in adultery. But to them the truth was not merciful, for it was true—sincere. He brought their shallow hypocrisy, baseness, chicanery, pride and self-complacency into the sunlight of His uncompromising truthfulness, and, pointing to their lying words and fraudulent acts, said, "O ye hypocrites." He never closed His eyes to the real state of those He met: was never blinded by their learning or authoritative position; was never biased by a wish for popularity nor permitted truth to stand in abeyance that He might win followers to His cause.

He bluntly told the multitude who followed Him with words of praise for His teaching that they had come to Him not for the word of life, but for food—because He had worked a miracle on the loaves and fishes. To the flattering young man who approached Him with expressions of regard saying, "Good Master," He did not return the pleased salutation expected, but answered, "Why call you me good?" as if to say, "You are not honoring the goodness of my divine nature, or my teaching, but are trying to flatter me." He would not stoop to flatter others; He severely rejected flattery

when offered to Himself—and all because it is a *lie*. He insisted that what was in the mind and heart of those who came to Him be displayed in the speech and in the actions. Such is our model on this point of truthfulness.

Lying is a sin against society and an offense against God. It attacks the very foundations of society. Men can live together and make progress only so long as they can trust one another. Civilization is based on mutual dependence, and mutual dependence without mutual confidence is unthinkable. The more flagrant violators of this trust—the criminal class—society puts behind prison bars. Nor does society fail to punish the liar. He who is forever making lying excuses, who is ever ready with a denial or a plausible explanation when detected in or accused of wrong-doing, soon finds himself charged with things of which he is innocent, and his denials and excuses rejected. He has destroyed the confidence which his fellows should be able to place in his word. The “romancer” and the chronic exaggerator soon find even their lightest word, their most moderate statement disregarded and themselves treated with contempt more or less lightly veiled. He who pretends to virtue or to cleverness which he does not possess, receives no credit for those qualities to which he may justly lay claim, while he is cut off from improvement by his pretense to perfection.

Lying is an offense against God, for it attacks His very nature, truth. It is hard for us to have a realizing sense of this attribute of the divine, but consider it in the Person of our Saviour, and you will gain some idea of its nature.

When we say that Christ is true we mean that He is absolutely and unchangeably the same. Everything may change and shift and alter, but the Son of God knows no shadow of change. Very clearly does St. John bring out this fact. Looking at the judgment in vision, he beholds in the Judge the Master whose best beloved he was. He had laid his head upon that breast, he had looked into those eyes, and been greeted by the tender smile of welcome from those lips. The great Judge is, he knows, his friend. Yet on beholding Him, St. John “*Fell at his feet as though dead!*” Why? Because St. John knew that the Saviour’s warm, personal love for him did not alter one iota the piercing truth of His judgment and His penalties. St. John knew that the sentence passed upon his life and upon his acts would be in absolute accord with that life and those acts. He would be accepted into eternal life because he had

fitted himself for that acceptance; he would be cast into outer darkness had he failed in this regard. In the judgment the Saviour's truth is dominant. He will separate the good from the wicked. Why? Because He hates the wicked and loves the good? By no means; but because the wicked are wicked and the good are good, and because He Himself is *true*. He will mete out punishment to the sinner. Why? Because sin by its very nature demands punishment—holds the punishment within itself—and because Christ is *true*. He would not be God if He were otherwise. In Him there is no alteration nor shadow of change.

This is what we mean when we say that Our Lord is true; that He is the *truth*. He sees things exactly as they are, and represents and judges them exactly as they are. It is His very essence so to do. And when we claim to be Christians, followers of Christ, we claim first of all to be true and truthful—to see life and its events exactly as they are, and to report them exactly as we see them. Lying, insincerity, subterfuge, exaggeration, are of the devil. The great warfare is between truth and falsehood, between God and the devil, and if we claim to be soldiers of Jesus Christ we should not array ourselves in the armor of the father of lies.

If lying in itself is so hateful to God, how much more hateful must slander be, slander which violates truth, justice and charity. How God regards it is shown very clearly in the Book of Numbers, where we read that when the Israelites were advancing toward the Promised Land, Miriam, the sister of Moses, and Aaron, her brother, went about the camp calumniating Moses, because they were averse to the latter's wife. Almighty God stopped the onward progress of the people, summoned the culprits before His presence, upbraided them, and then withdrew the pillar of cloud, leaving Miriam covered with leprosy. Could God have shown His detestation of a sin more plainly? Because of this slander He had stopped the progress of the chosen people toward the Land of Promise, withdrew the guiding cloud, and stricken the guilty one with the most loathsome of all diseases. His detestation of this sin is no less now than it was then. The soul that is guilty of this offense is stopped on its way to heaven, the guiding of God's grace is removed from it, and a moral leprosy descends upon it. Like leprosy, slander is a loathsome thing, shunned and hated by all who are themselves sound. The habitual slanderer finds himself shunned

and avoided, for the cry of his spiritual uncleanness rings in his every word.

A peculiarity of the slanderous story is that no one owns it. It is like the little stone spoken of in the Scriptures, "cut without hands out of the mountain," which smote the goodly statue of gold and iron and clay and laid it low. Slander, like the "little stone," came into being "without hands," but every hand is outstretched to give it momentum in its onward course, while each disowns the destruction wrought when the fair character lies in ruins.

In England there used to be a game played called "scandal." The company sat in a circle. One whispered some story—generally a bit of gossip—to his neighbor, who in turn repeated it to the one next to him, and so on to the end. The amusement—and, as a rule, the astonishment—came when the story told by the first was compared with that received by the last. Truly an instructive game.

The consequence of calumny on its victim is incalculable. How many a man has lost his position, his reputation, and his honor because of the false accusation of some slanderous tongue! Who will repair this injury? The thief may reform, may labor honestly and gain enough to pay back what he has stolen, may face his judge on the last day with his debt canceled. But how will the slanderer restore the reputation he has filched? His retraction will not be believed, and will not reach all the places whither his calumny has penetrated. He owes a debt which he can never pay: a debt which he contracted without any gain to himself. Truly has the poet said:

"Who steals my purse, steals trash;
But he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that, which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

How severe, then, must be the judgment against the calumniator! All the suffering he has caused—the bitterness of soul, the privation, aye, perhaps the sin and consequent eternal destruction he has brought upon his victim—he must bear before the throne of God, unpaid, uncanceled. Surely "they who do such things are worthy of death."

Detraction is as more insidious as it is a more common form of this sin against justice. Detraction is the telling of the fault of our neighbor to another who knew nothing of it, or the remaining silent when our neighbor's honor is attacked and we could defend him, or at least mention extenuating circumstances.

The one who is guilty of detraction usually defends himself by asserting that he is speaking the truth. This is far from being an extenuating circumstance. The injury done is often all the greater because of the whole or partial truth of the statement. When a man is forced to admit that the charge is substantially true, what hope has he of establishing his injured reputation? He who has suffered from slander can at least gain the championship and the sympathy of some few who have heard the charge, but the victim of detraction is forced to hang his head in shame, or to bear with what silent fortitude he can the cold looks and harsh criticisms that are meted out to him.

They who appeared against Our Lord at His trial are known as the false witnesses, yet their testimony was in part true. They said, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." What He really said was, "If you destroy this temple (the temple of His body), in three days I will raise it up." Strange that the professed enemies of Christ should find so many disciples among those who claim to be followers of the Incarnate Charity.

There are many self-styled "honest" people, who make a virtue not only of their ill-temper, but of their habit of repeating stories derogatory to the characters of their neighbors. They say that they "believe in plain speaking," "always tell honestly what they know," regard as hypocrites those who condone or pass over in silence the faults of others. What a rock of scandal must the Saviour be to such? When the woman taken in adultery had been driven into His presence by her "honest" accusers, He did not bend His ear greedily to hear the details of her guilt, but silently bowing His head, that He might not witness her confusion, bade the innocent among her accusers cast the first stone. When we are tempted to hurl the stone of gossip or detraction, let us pause and give ear to the Saviour's voice—sounding now as then—which bids us look into our hearts and our own lives, and to refrain from reproach until we can find them stainless.

Remember, too, there is a detraction of action as well as of word. The quietly appreciative smile, the silent head-shake, when some brother's good name is assailed, is but a more cowardly way of spreading the damning story. We can at least show our disapproval of the sin of detraction that is enacted before us. We would feel called upon to check some ribald or obscene exhibition that took

place in our presence, on the ground that all immodesty is offensive to God: but He who proclaimed the Sixth Commandment proclaimed also the Eighth, and the thunders of Sinai echoed for one as for the other. His condemnation rings in no unmistakable terms. "Thou shalt not be a detractor nor a whisperer among my people." "Be not called a whisperer, and be not taken in thy tongue and confounded, for confusion and repentance is upon a thief, and an evil mark of disgrace upon the double tongued, but to the whisperer hatred, enmity and reproach." "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all, and he that shall abide with him shall be hateful; but the silent and wise man shall be honored."

We must take to heart the lesson that there is no limit to the harm an unbridled tongue can do—no limit to the good a tongue restrained to the government of the Saviour can accomplish. The lie, the calumny, the detraction, have left deep and wide the marks of destruction on human society; defiling minds, ruining characters, driving off social and domestic peace, transforming blessings into curses, "working havoc in the temple of Christ into which we all have been built." As we contemplate the scene of misery and wretchedness wrought by the abuse of the glorious gift of speech, the lying word, the veiled innuendo, the bitter calumny that takes a fair name and fouls it in the mire of falsehood, do we not realize the truth of the description in St. James: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of our nativity. and is set on fire by hell."

God grant that we can look at this dark scene with feelings only of horror and condemnation; that not one of us must needs say with deep contrition of heart, "I, too, have had part in this accursed thing; I, too, have defiled and marred my soul by my evil words."

We must realize this one and all, that our speech is a mighty power for good or ill and treat it accordingly. We should bridle our tongue, but nowhere does it need more careful watching than in the things that pertain to the divine virtues of truthfulness. In the words of a noted writer on this subject, "Most of us have never thought of estimating the power of anything so common and familiar as speech. But the mightiest forces that actuate the world are those that are unobserved just because they are common and familiar." The crash of the thunder fills us with dread, though the storm after all strike but a chimney or a tree. The earthquake

is a cause of fear, though it pass off in harmless rumblings. But the breath of air, which no one notes, taint it and the whole world reeks with pestilence; remove it, and every living thing will perish. The sun which rises daily to run its course gives life and growth to plant and animal, and the slow current which sweeps over the Pacific, bearing with it a genial warmth, tempers our air, and makes the land by the western sea a garden of the earth. So it is with our speech. It is as common as the air we breathe, as the sunshine we welcome, as the water that washes our shores; but it is mighty in its operation; it is universal. It never sleeps. God's work or else the devil's work it is forever doing and it is our business to see, as far as possible, that the work is God's work. We may claim no peculiar right to advise our friends. But whether you are always blotting out the line that marks off right from wrong in matters of speech; whether you are ever ready to excuse the convenient lie, whether the calumniator, or the talker whose conversation is punctuated with tittle-tattle can count on your ready smile and listening ear, whether you are ever ready to turn others toward gossip and frivolity, makes a greater difference than you can compute—a difference as between life and death. Oh, that our dear Lord, who willed to be called the "Word," because he was the revealer of God to man, would teach us to follow Him, as in all things so in that. It is in our power to reveal God's faith and God's truth and God's justice which our fidelity and God's grace has erected in our hearts; and woe to us if we do not reveal it; woe to us if we do not keep in mind the solemn warning: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

XXIV. HYPOCRISY AND FLATTERY

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The common root of hypocrisy and flattery is pretense. Vices abhorred by mankind in general and especially chastised by Our Lord.

I. The nature of hypocrisy. Judged by standard of opposite virtue. It is lying by means of deeds rather than words. The difference between hypocrisy and lawful simulation. Story of St. Athanasias and the priest Timothy.

II. The nature of flattery. The difference between flattery and lawful praise. Flattery is inordinate praise of another. Fruit of flattery—injury to souls. Excites to vainglory. Encourages to sin. May also lead to serious temporal loss.

III. The history of the scribes and Pharisees. Their religion consisted more in external ceremony than in internal sanctity. They worshiped the letter of the law at the expense of its spirit. The questions of fasting and of hand washing. The eight curses.

Conclusion.—Application to self. We all have the roots of hypocrisy in our souls. To recognize this is the first step toward religion pure and unfeigned.

The sin of hypocrisy is by no means the worst of sins. Yet such is its character that it is about the worst sin a man would care to have attributed to him. There is an especial lowness about it which places it lower in public estimation than many sins which are in themselves more grievous. To have won the reputation of being a hypocrite is to have gone down to the lowest depths of social degradation. Hypocrisy is a species of lying. Still, I think, a man would rather be called a liar than a hypocrite. Our Lord held up the mirror to this vice in His scathing rebukes of the scribes and the Pharisees. He whose pure soul reflected eternal truth, He whose keen gaze pierced all things through and through, had a special horror of finding pretense in a human soul. Let us examine carefully, then, these two forms of sinful pretense, namely, hypocrisy, which is the attributing to one's self virtues not possessed; and flattery, which is the attributing to others virtue not possessed.

The standard from which these vices must be judged is the opposite virtue of truthfulness. Now, truthfulness requires that a person should appear externally and by his outward conduct such as he

really is. He is not expected to make public confession of all his sins. Everybody knows that everybody else is more or less a sinner. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Still, in spite of a certain amount of praiseworthy secretiveness concerning the sinful part of our lives, there is supposed to be a certain degree of correspondence between that which we are and that which we profess to be. The external life, which is supposed to be a tolerably fair indication of our internal life, is made up both of words and of deeds. If it is contrary to truth to say things different from those which one has in one's mind, it is also contrary to truth to do things different from those which one has in one's mind. Hypocrisy then is lying made up of deeds rather than of words. And lying is sinful whether by word or by deed.

There are, of course, certain circumstances in which pretense is not done maliciously and in which it is perfectly blameless. There is a pretense in things indifferent in themselves and done with a good purpose. Here there is no question of taking to one's self glory to which one has no right, or of attributing to others glory to which they have no right. When Cleophas asked Our Lord, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and has not known the things that have been done there in these days?" He answered as if He did not know: "What things?" On another occasion, as He drew near to the town of Emmaus with His disciples, He acted as if He did not know that He was going to stay there. "He made as if He would go further." These are instances of good and legitimate pretense. They are actions indifferent in themselves but done with a good motive. They ought not to be called by the name of "pretense" but by the name of "simulation." Just as there is the peculiar use of words known as "lawful equivocation" so there is the peculiar use of deeds known as "lawful simulation."

However difficult it may be to give an exact intellectual representation of these two kinds of acts; and however awkward it may be to make our definitions fit in with all concrete circumstances, there is no one who does not recognize at once the difference between the pretense which is lawful simulation and the pretense which is sinful hypocrisy and flattery. It all depends on the motive with which the act is done. If the pretense is in order to gain a better reputation than that to which one

has a right, then it is bad. If the pretense is in order to follow out some lawful end, then it is good.

The story of St. Athanasius at the Council of Tyre well illustrates our meaning. The Arian party had brought an accusation against him of having insulted a young girl. Athanasius appeared before the Council and with him a priest called Timothy. Timothy pretended he was Athanasius and thus spoke to the accuser: "You say that I have been with you?" "Yes," she replied on oath, "you have sinned with me." In this way, by the simulation of Timothy, the fair name of Athanasius was saved. When Timothy for the time being assumed the rôle of Athanasius, it was not with a view of persuading everybody that he had the virtues of Athanasius, but simply and solely with a view to preserving Athanasius' good name. It is the motive which gives the character to the act in matters of pretense. The conduct of Timothy was that of lawful simulation.

The sin of flattery must be similarly distinguished from the lawful recognition and praise of another's virtues. Amiability is a very rich possession. Life is rough even when we have made the best of it. He, therefore, who by his kind and gentle manners and by his tactful words of encouragement helps to smooth away the difficulties of his neighbor follows a high vocation. It is only when the praise is given out of due measure, when things are praised which are blameworthy or when the praise is bestowed for unworthy ends, that it becomes the vice of flattery. Hence, God says through the mouth of the Prophet Ezechiel: "Wo to them that sew cushions under every elbow; and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age to catch souls."

There is the fruit of the sin of flattery—it injures souls. The injury may not always be intended. Nor yet may it always be foreseen. But we may as a rule take for granted that few human natures are so fixed in the way of perfection as to be quite insensible to the pleasures of flattery. Most people would reject it if it were offered grossly and obviously. Few would reject it if delicately insinuated.

First, then, flattery excites to vainglory. And the soul blinded by vainglory knows not what sin into which it is going to fall next. Its habitual state of mind is to please men rather than to please God. St. Paul had to warn himself: "Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of

Christ." Sometimes it is aimed directly at encouraging a man in his sins. His sins as such are belittled, or they are called manly or even heroic. To praise a man for his sins is to excite him directly against the love of God! And this is to court the condemnation of Isaiah: "Wo to you that call evil good and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." Or again, flattery may be practised to injure a man bodily rather than spiritually. To praise a friend beyond what we know he actually merits may not only cause in him vainglory but it may cause him to enter upon undertakings which he cannot possibly carry to a successful issue, and so may result in grave temporal loss for him. "Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy." It is not necessary that we should intend these grave injuries to our neighbor in order to commit grievous sin. It is sufficient if in some confused way we foresee them and still persist in our flatteries.

It may be well to examine these sins as pointed out in the scribes and Pharisees of the old law. We shall then be the better able to recognize them and deal with them in the scribes and Pharisees of the new law, namely, in ourselves, for even the best of us are not entirely guiltless.

The scribes and Pharisees were considered by the common people to be very learned, very just and very holy. But their learning, justice and holiness consisted chiefly in external action rather than in internal affection. Their one predominating intention was to appear before men as strict observers of the law. In interpreting the law, however, they clung to the dead letter. As long as they were able to quote the law word for word they cared nothing as to what depraved sense they might put upon it or as to what ignoble end they might apply it. The real spirit that lay behind the letter was of no consequence to them so long as they were able to make a show of correct ceremony and plenty of hand-washing. Our Lord did not disapprove of the law or of ceremonial washing, but he did disapprove of making these the essence of religion. "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." The whole of God's spirit that was expressed by that law must eventually be evolved and made manifest. "For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not

pass of the law, till all be fulfilled." It was the life and conduct which the law regulated which was of supreme importance. It was not the expounding or the hearing of the law which mattered most. It was the doing of it. "He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than the scribes' and Pharisees', you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

On one occasion they suborn the disciples of John to try to catch Our Lord in order that they may accuse Him of doing something unworthy of Himself, something which by contrast might show them up in a better light. And so Our Lord is asked by John's disciples: "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples do not fast?" Here it is not a question even of keeping the law, for Christ always kept the law of fasting. It is a work of supererogation, something done above the law. So the Pharisees endeavor to taunt Our Lord that He, being a Reformer and a Master of perfection, does not fast as they. But Christ knows that their fasting is hypocrisy and done to win the praise of men rather than to foster union with God. He shows them that fasting is but the external incident of an inward disposition, which disposition is not suitable for all times and places. "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast."

On another occasion they affect to find fault with Christ's disciples for not duly complying with the law of hand-washing. "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread."

Once more, those of Jerusalem, living in the very bosom of faith and religion, arrogate to themselves the censorship of new teachers and new doctrines. Christ Himself comes under their ban. The scribes profess expert knowledge of the law whilst the Pharisees pretend to great sanctity and the rigid observance of the law. The washing of hands has been prescribed to excite their minds to spiritual washings of the soul by means of penance and contrition. Washing of hands, therefore, with them becomes the great mark of sanctity. So absorbed do they become in their external rite that they lose all sight of its internal signification. Hence, the reproach of Christ: "Why do you also transgress the

commandment of God for your tradition? . . . Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you saying: This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me teaching doctrines and commandments of men." They pretend to be scandalised at such teaching, but Our Lord sees through and behind their grimaces, and drives home His thrust. The mask must be torn away. The traditions which have usurped the place of the word of God must be set aside. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." St. Peter asks for further explanation. Then does Christ turn to him with the withering rebuke that holiness does not consist in ceremony nor yet sinfulness in absence of ceremony. "Are you also without understanding? . . . For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man."

Hypocrisy in the teacher, however, is not a reason for rejecting the message which he is commissioned to teach. Our Lord draws a clean distinction between the office of the scribes and Pharisees and their personal conduct. Their doctrine is to be followed but their hypocrisy avoided. "The scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore what they shall say to you, observe and do." Then follows the divine eloquence laying bare the true character of those who are pretending to be so good, yet whose goodness is all pretense. "For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them. And all their works they do for to be seen of men. For they make their phylacterics broad and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place and to be called by men, Rabbi. . . .

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in you suffer not to enter.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive the greater judgment.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves.

"Wo to you blind guides, that say, whosoever shall swear by the temple it is nothing; but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor. Ye foolish and blind; for whether is greater, the gold or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold?

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law; judgment and mercy and faith. These things you ought to have done and not leave those things undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

"Wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; you serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?"

Thus if Christ can bless He can also curse. In the Sermon on the Mount He gave forth His eight beatitudes for the simple and for the pure of heart and for the poor and for the peace makers. But His eight curses He reserved for those high and mighty in their own estimation, the scribes and the Pharisees, the flatterer and the hypocrite. Am I the object of those curses? Few of us are so deeply conscious of the difference between what we are in the sight of God and what we are in the sight of men. I may not be able to say in cold and naked language that I am a hypocrite, or that I am a wanton flatterer. But it is only a question of degree. Isaias said of the people of Israel that every one was a hypocrite. If I cannot label myself thus I must admit that there is a certain amount of hollowness in my religion. When I go to Communion I strike my breast and say: "Lord, I am

not worthy; Lord, I am not worthy; Lord, I am not worthy." But let another suggest that I am not worthy and I am up in arms and on my defense. All of which proves that if only I dig deep enough I shall find the roots of hypocrisy in my soul. Not until I have reached the roots and recognized the possibility of growths can I expect to produce a pure and unfeigned religious life. And what holds good for me in guarding against hypocrisy holds good for my neighbor in guarding against flattery. I must try to form a just estimate of his character and treat him accordingly. "A man that speaketh to his friend with flattering and dissembling words, spreadeth a net for his feet." And again: "He that rebuketh a man shall afterward find favor with him, more than he that by a flattering tongue deceiveth him."

XXV. RASH JUDGMENT AND TALE-BEARING

BY THE REV. JOHN H. STAPLETON

"All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."—Matt. vii, 12.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*The fairness with which we should treat the neighbor is exemplified by the proceedings in courts of justice, where no man is condemned except on proof of guilt, and all reports are excluded that serve merely to satisfy curiosity or to turn the minds of the jury against the accused. So are we bidden to act.*

I. Rash judgment.—(a) *Related to doubts and suspicions; the unbelieving Thomas; in what the evil consists.* (b) *Judgment more than these; rash judgment condemned by Scripture and common sense; its perils; mercy for the failings of others; if not, then justice, at least.*

II. Backbiting and tale-bearing.—*How related to each other; each described; malice thereof, and cowardice.*

Conclusion.—*Hoping to be judged mercifully by God and to be treated fairly by our fellowmen, let us show others the same consideration.*

To be dealt with fairly is what every man asks of his fellows, and to this much he has a right in all justice and charity. He is entitled to be judged according to just reasoning and to enjoy the benefit of every reasonable doubt, if doubt there be. And all attempts to disturb his peace and the harmonious relations which exist between him and his fellowmen, by the retailing of stories, even true, even not positively defamatory, are in contravention to the laws of God.

The proceedings used in the courts of justice furnish us with an example of the fairness with which the neighbor should be treated; for the law is the highest expression of human wisdom and approaches as nearly to divine perfection as it is humanly possible. The prisoner at the bar is given a fair hearing. He is not condemned except on evidence established by facts duly authenticated; his crime must be proven. If, though charged with wrongdoing, the court does not *know* that he is guilty, or merely comes to the conclusion that he *might* be guilty, he is acquitted, and is to be presumed innocent. A good judge will warn the twelve men, who are to pass judgment on the case, not to base that judgment on appearances, or hearsay evidence, or *ex parte* statements or

reports and opinions that vary according to passion, interest and prejudice. Guilt must be declared on proof.

On the other hand, the judge will do all in his power to exclude all matter that does not pertain to the case under consideration and serves only to cloud the minds of the jurors with prejudice against the prisoner. A shrewd, unscrupulous lawyer will move heaven and earth to succeed in this line. He will bring up all the evil the unfortunate is known to have done, will present doubtful deeds in an unfavorable light and call up the dark side of his life. He will maliciously rehash old scandals, dig up buried wrongs and expose to light the hidden skeleton. All this, not so much to injure the reputation of the accused as to influence the minds of the jury, to draw away their sympathy, to arouse their antipathy, to poison them against him and thus force them to return a verdict of condemnation. This he endeavors to do; but the voice of the judge is heard charging them solemnly to pay no attention to such tales and to confine themselves solely to the evidence legally presented.

What the fair-minded judge aims at in the case of an unhappy wretch brought before him for judgment, God bids us likewise to do in our relations with our fellowmen. No question here, of course, of false witnessing, which is calumny or slander, or of exposing another's secret faults, which is the sin of detraction; but rather of that spirit of unfairness which either, against holy charity and sometimes against justice, judges another rashly, or spreads tales about him, not intended primarily to injure his character, but calculated and intended to create an unfavorable impression, to stir up ill-feeling, to sever friendships, to sow discord, etc. When we are tempted to erect a tribunal in our minds concerning the neighbor, we should try to copy, if not the perfection of the divine Judge, at least the honesty and fairness of the human. A fair trial, then, a prudent judgment, and no testimony heard or given except in its proper time and place!

But not all of us, perhaps, have a clear notion of just what is meant by a judgment, which is often confused with doubts and suspicions, but which is far different from, and much more than, these. Concerning any given statement, the doubter says: "I do not know whether it is true or false," purely and simply; the suspicious person says: "very likely it is true (or false), I am inclined to believe it is, yet I can not say positively"; he who judges comes out squarely and declares to himself: "this is a fact, or this is not a

fact, I know it, there is no doubt about it." Notice the degrees from uncertainty to certainty. In the first case, judgment is totally suspended; in the second, it inclines a trifle to one side or the other; but in the last, the balance goes down with its full weight, the question is settled, the guilt or innocence of a person is decided in the mind of him who judges. When Thomas heard the disciples relate the fact of the Lord's apparition, the question of their veracity arose in his mind. He turned it over, seeking a solution whereby he might satisfy himself as to whether or not they spoke the truth. Apparently he did not succeed, he could come to no definite conclusion. He did not accuse them of falsifying or of dreaming, but he could not on the other hand admit the truth of their words. He decided nothing. Incapable of decision, his mind suspended between acceptance and denial, he refused to judge, dismissed the subject, and awaited further developments. In a word, he doubted.

Or perhaps he went farther. There was evidence on both sides. The story to which he listened could hardly have been concocted; they could not all have been deceived; it was preposterous to charge them with wilful misrepresentation. Yet the thing related was incredible and, naturally speaking, impossible. He dared not deny; he felt inclined to assent. He half believed what he had heard; that is to say, he suspected the truth. More than a doubt therefore; yet not so much as a judgment, for there lacked sufficient evidence on which to found an honest judgment.

Doubt and suspicion concerning the guilt of another arise at times in the mind, and naturally. When there are good reasons for doubting, and suspecting, there can not be sin. Even void of all reason and motive, a doubt or suspicion that enters the mind is not sinful if we do not take it seriously and make it our own. But if without reasonable grounds we entertain and hold to doubts and suspicions that are prejudicial to the neighbor, we are rash and unfair; and God is offended by the false testimony we bear against him before the bar of our own minds. And the malice thereof is grave if such a state of mind is traceable to deep-seated antipathy, aversion or hatred; for then charity is seriously wounded; or if the conditions are such as to make the doubt or suspicion gravely injurious to him who has a right to our esteem and good opinion, and has done nothing to forfeit it justly.

It is clear that rash judgment is a far greater evil than either

rash doubts or rash suspicions, for here the accused is formally condemned without his guilt being established. We no longer think or suspect without sufficient reason that such a one is a thief or a drunkard or a liar or an immoral person, but deep down in our souls we believe, we are convinced that he is such. As far as we are concerned, he is what we have decided him to be. Here then is a man who is declared a criminal and has forfeited our respect; we have sat on his case and handed down the verdict. Yet there is not evidence to prove it. The trial has been a farce, justice has not presided over the deliberations. With nothing proven against him, innocent perhaps, he suffers the punishment of the guilty. The evil and malice of such proceedings are just as palpable before the judgment-seat of the mind as in the open court of justice. Justice is mocked, charity is made a by-word.

"Who art thou," says St. Paul, "who judgeth another's servant? to his own lord he standeth or falleth." And St. James declares that such a one simply usurps the place of God. We are commanded by the Lord to "think no evil," that is, to form no unfavorable opinion on slight or insufficient grounds. Apart from the gross uncharity of it, there is always the danger of our being in error. Right or wrong, our rashness is sinful; but when the testimony we bear is at once false and rash, the evil is two-fold aggravated. Rash judgments are nearly always false. It is so easy, when one is envious or vindictive or proud, or desires to lessen his own failings, to be blind to the real merits of the case and to view with distorted vision the appearances that tell against the neighbor. The Pharisees judged Our Lord rashly and falsely on every occasion. If He sat at a feast, He was a wine-drinker and a glutton; if He drove out devils, He was in league with Belzebub and wrought by his power. And even when not actuated by evil motives how easy it is to misinterpret actions, especially as we examine very frequently no more deeply than the surface and take things at first sight! Circumstances pointed to the guilt of the chaste Susanna. Benjamin, found with the golden cup in his possession, was seemingly a thief. Joseph had no word in his defense but the reiteration of his innocence, after the lewd Egyptian had shown the false evidence of his wrong-doing. And to the casual observer Judith must have appeared on an errand of evil, as she wended her way to the tent of Holofernes to deliver her people by the death of the tyrant.

Before judging, then, let us be sure that we have all the facts of the case, nor trust to appearances or the mere word of others. Let us dread to impute improper motives, but rather be inclined to excuse an act, if evil, on the ground of ignorance or misconception, or good, though mistaken, motives. When there is no defense possible, why not attribute the fault to human infirmity and frailty, for which we can well afford to make some allowance. The advice of St. Bernard is good: "If you can not excuse the deed, excuse the intention. Attribute the fault to ignorance, to surprise, to frailty. If the act be of so vile a nature that it can not be justified by any plea of that sort, attribute it to a violent temptation, and say to yourself: 'If I had been so violently tempted, what now would I be!'"

If our charity does not go thus far and we are unwilling to excuse, then let our opinion, if opinion we must have, be at least well founded. Remember that the evil here in question is not in the telling of what we think of people, but in that very thinking unfavorably of them; nor yet in judging them, but in judging them rashly. And a good subject for examination of conscience for us all would be to investigate and see if the knowledge we imagine we have of the misdeeds of others squares with the facts as they really are, and if we have been fair in forming of them the opinion we have. The perfection of charity may not be demanded of us, but fairness that condemns only after an honest trial every man demands of us, even as we would have them treat us. Judge, if you will; but use with others the same rule wherewith you measure yourself. And think not that your uncharitable judgments can be justified because they are confined within the privacy of your own breast.

Not only does the judge strive to have genuine evidence presented to show the guilt or innocence of the accused, but he labors, often unsuccessfully, to exclude all such reports and testimony as are craftily introduced for the sole purpose of prejudicing the jury against him; to exclude again the record of his sins, mistakes and disgrace paraded out to contrast with his assertion of innocence and thus discredit him and mayhap condemn him in default of better proof. So does the Lord warn us to "hedge in our ears with thorns and hear not a wicked tongue." The wicked tongues that pick and snap and snarl and industriously ply a trade of cowardly meanness are those of the backbiter and the tale-bearer. These workers

of iniquity are close relatives the one to the other, in that their stock in trade is the known fault of the neighbor: unfortunate happenings, scandalous anecdotes, blunders in speech and action, etc. They differ in that the former speaks for the sole malicious pleasure of talking and being listened to, while the latter carries his unholy wares backward and forward with an eye to making mischief among neighbors. Neither may have the intention or desire to lessen the character of their victims primarily, and thus may not be guilty of detraction proper. They do not precisely utter falsehoods and thereby escape the guilt of slander. But while the one makes evil sport of another's failings, the other seeks with vulgar malice to spread misunderstandings and ill-feeling in the community and to stir up one against another. The latter is, of course, the more criminal; but he often furnishes his partner with material for mischief and not unfrequently produces himself the results of disorder and dissension.

The backbiter is of a keenly observant, even prying, disposition. He has a fine, well developed scent for unsavory gossip, a good memory for evil, and a natural itching for retailing all he sees and hears that reflects on others and will provoke his hearers to merriment and laughter. His mind is well stored; he learns a great deal and forgets nothing; and no tale loses with him in the telling. He watches especially those whom he dislikes or against whom he bears ill-feeling or hatred. Any fault or blunder that he discovers, he blazons forth with delight. He is known far and wide. He is feared and detested, even while he seems to entertain, for "the venom of asps is under his lips." His unfailing topic of conversation being other people's foibles and mistakes, he becomes to the community in which he resides a walking bill-board of gossip and scandal.

The tale-bearer listens with devilish glee, and then is off to relate what he has heard where it will do the most harm. This mischief-maker does not announce to a gaping public, like the other, all that he has ferreted out, but with a fine discrimination picks the party that should not properly be informed and desires it least. He cheerfully carries his Pandora's box of trouble to a spot where peace and harmony have hitherto reigned, opens it, leaves it, and then goes away with satisfaction in his heart. On his way, with a word here and a word there, he will help along the work of havoc and destruction wherever he espies a favorable opening; and de-

parting, leaves behind him a trail of misery and strife. Thus are friendships severed, distrust engendered, suspicions aroused, etc. After-explanations avail little, once the seed of evil has been planted in the breast of the aggrieved one. By a word the harm is done; many words have not the power to undo it.

Of such a one may be said what David says of his calumniators: "he whets his tongue like a sword, he bends his bow—a bitter thing—to shoot in secret the undefiled." He has armed himself, as says the Scripture again, with "a dart, a sword and a sharp arrow," whereby he ruins the peace of his neighbor and kills his own soul. Holy Writ declares backbiters and tale-bearers accursed: "the whisperer and double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace." "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all, and he that shall abide with him shall be hated." For, "the venom of asps is under their lips," and their malevolent tongues rob people of the priceless treasure of peace.

Being given an open enemy, one may fight. If he spreads false reports about us or maliciously attacks our character and reputation directly, the law may be invoked to punish him. But here all is done behind our backs, in the security of our absence; and what is still more unfortunate, what is related of us is true and supposedly can not be denied. The advantage taken of us is complete, and we are helplessly thrown on the mercy of harpies who know no mercy. No opportunity of being heard and explaining is afforded us; the harm is done without our being aware, and then it is too late for remedies of any kind.

Offenders as we all are, who shall one day be judged with equity, let us judge others as leniently as we hope the Lord will one day judge us, for unto us it will be measured as we shall have measured out to our fellowmen. Imperfect as we are, let us allow for the imperfections of our brethren, and be not more severe on them than the just Judge, we trust, will be severe on us. Let us leave judgment to the Lord, who alone knows all things, and content ourselves with deserving mercy by the mercy we show unto all men. When the picture of some human misfortune arises before us, tempting us either to pass judgment or to confide to others our impressions, making merry at the expense of a brother or exciting against him the ill will of a neighbor, let us invoke the wisdom that will enable us to turn our eyes from the picture without to a picture within ourselves.

And if our vision is not obscured by pride and jealousy we shall perhaps perceive a trace of similarity in both images that may set us thinking of a pity and mercy that we shall perhaps one day stand in need of. "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them." This is the Golden Rule. It is not high spirituality or the acme of perfection in the Christian religion. This rule of conduct was already old when Christ came upon earth, and men without the light of His teachings practised it. Much more is expected of those who follow the divine precepts of the Redeemer. But this much is imperiously demanded, as the very foundation of a truly Christian life, that we treat the neighbor fairly, treat him as we would wish him to treat us.

XXVI. CHARITY BETWEEN CATHOLICS

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Let us work good to all men, but especially to these who are of the household of the faith."—Gal. vi, 10.

SYNOPSIS.—The international effect of the spread of the Christian spirit of charity by the Catholic Church. The law of charity universal—applies with difference of degree to all our fellowmen, but especially to our own who are of the household of the faith.

This charity is founded on faith as well as on love—cemented by common suffering. This charity does not destroy diversity of opinion on non-religious topics.

Importance of the unity of charity emphasized by Our Lord and by the Scriptures. Catholics often fail in this duty. The harm done to the Church, to the cause of religion and to individuals by this failure.

Duty of keeping Christ before us. His law, His love; duty of helping Catholic works of charity.

I. In Christianity, that is to say, in the Catholic Church, which alone out of all denominations possesses the spirit of Christianity in its fulness, there is no such thing as narrowness. Breadth of sympathy, largeness of mind, wideness and all-enhancing charity always mark the Church. Narrowness of charity was one great defect in the religions of old time and fragmentary sects of the present. Even the Mosaic religion, though divine, was not superior to it. The Jews were chosen by God out of all the nations of the earth and set apart for His purposes; they had a covenant and a revelation not extended to others; hence, they looked down with contempt on outsiders as Gentiles and unclean. The splendid civilization of Greece and Rome hated the outer barbarians and classed them as little above the beasts. Hence, the wholesale massacres in war; the cruelties toward prisoners of war and slaves; the absence of all benevolence toward foreign nations. Christianity displaced these sentiments of international hostility in favor of the law of love for all men. Through the Apostles it taught that before God there is no distinction of Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, bond or free. All are brethren in Jesus Christ, and to all without exception we owe the debt of love. According to the parable of the good Samaritan the stranger is a neighbor and a brother. On this

foundation the Church built up all races and tongues into that brotherhood of nations known as Christendom, and abolished the distinction of Greek and barbarian, freeman and slave. On the same principle we recognize all men, however they differ from us, as our brethren, created by the same God, redeemed by the same precious blood, called to the same salvation. It is our duty to love all men, though they may hate us and vilify our religion, our most sacred possession; it is our duty to serve them with temporal and spiritual service, leading them to the truth if they will let us, and in any case, giving them a share in our temporal goods when they require it, and in our prayers.

The natural law of love, however, is not abrogated by this broader law of charity. Jesus Christ does not destroy the law which He found on earth; He fulfils it and extends it. We have to love both those who are near us and those who are not, for this is the command of God. Still there is an order in charity, a natural order, an instructive consciousness that some have a special claim on us, a feeling of attraction to some in preference to others. Those who are nearer to us are naturally dearer. Divine charity consecrates that order; and while we love all men, it is right for us to show a proper love in different degrees to our relations, fellow citizens, fellow countrymen, benefactors, friends, in preference to strangers.

Besides the bonds of blood, of nationality, of language, of similar education and pursuits, there is another one mentioned by the Apostle which ought to draw men very close together, whether it be considered as a natural or as a supernatural bond. Besides the common life we lead with others in the same household or city, or the same stage of civilization, we belong to another community, more enduring, more important, more intimate, and that is the religion of Jesus Christ. We have been born again of water and the Holy Ghost into another family, we have all sat down in equality at the same divine banquet where we have been nourished with the bread of angels; we have all been enrolled under the one standard of the Holy Cross; we have our own laws, our own interests, our own particular hopes for the future. We form a natural visible community in this world, and we are held together in it by supernatural motives and divine grace. This constitutes a most real, strong and deep bond of connection, and gives rise to mutual obligations and claims for special love and service between us. St. Paul lays down in the text our double duty of the broader and of

the more special charity: "Let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi, 10).

II. The union of hearts in affection and kindness springs from the unity of minds in the same belief. Faith is the foundation of the perfect life, and charity is its completion. If we have a devout faith in God, knowing Him, seeing Him in the persons of those whom He has made in His likeness, being mindful of what He has said concerning our duty to our neighbor, this faith will certainly blossom forth and bear fruit in the form of loving regard and kind deeds toward others. Nothing else but faith, the complete faith of the Catholic Church, can create a true and divine charity. There are instances indeed of benevolent and useful lives among unbelievers. Natural kindness of disposition and human motives of goodness may at times produce such fruits in individual cases. But faith aided by grace is alone universal enough to train large masses of men to unselfishness, it alone is wide enough to make benevolence extend beyond a man's own immediate circle, it alone can inspire those heights of self-sacrifice in charity which are so distinctive of the Catholic Church. Charity must be founded on faith, else it is only humanity or philanthropy. Our love for others is not divine charity unless we love them for God's sake and for the reasons revealed by religion; our kindness to them is no more than natural virtue unless it springs from the grace of God. The perfect Christian then requires to be united with the other members of Christ's body, not only in faith, but also in love. He must be "careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. iv, 3). If he be deficient in either one or the other he has separated himself from Christ.

It is natural that close union in the same belief should draw men's hearts together more closely. This is particularly the case between Catholics. Education in the Catholic religion is a complete training of mind and heart; it goes down deep into a man's being, and does not just touch the surface of his soul. It produces, therefore, a considerable unity of views on many subjects, common sentiments and feelings, and a certain similarity of character. Not only that, but every Catholic has the assurance that he has so much in common with every other Catholic. In other denominations men may worship side by side and belong to the same religious body, yet cannot be sure that they agree on any one doctrine in the whole

Christian system; this is a barrier between them. But a Catholic man meeting another has a bond of sympathy with him, knowing that they have many interests in common, that their sentiments are identical on a vast range of the most important subjects. When men are so far of one mind in Christ Jesus they easily become of one heart.

Our Lord has done much for us in regard to our unity in the faith, by giving us the assurance of infallible guidance, the sense of perfect security, and the grace of union. It is for us to take care of that other unity of charity. This is left more dependent on our good will. Here we have fewer safe-guards, and must watch more carefully lest we fail.

III. Common suffering is another bond of union; and this is a further reason why Catholics should stand together in charity. Even in free countries and enlightened times the enemies of religious freedom are very numerous. The general theory may be that religion is a man's own private affair, and that it should not be counted against him, provided that he does his duty well in his relations of business or public life; but there are very few Catholics who have never found themselves objects of suspicion or unfair treatment on account of their faith. In the most advanced countries of the world you may find special political disabilities imposed on Catholics for the sole reason of their religion. In many localities bigotry has notably declined; yet even there much remains concealed, ashamed to show itself publicly, but bitter as ever and active in petty matters, while in other countries public persecution of the Church is in full vigor. Though some may not be affected by it, and others may seldom hear of it, bigotry still remains as a force that Catholics must generally take account of.

Other men combine into societies to the injury of Catholics; the least we can do is to befriend one another at every opportunity. How hard it is for a Catholic to find himself struggling with the disadvantage his religion brings him, and at the same time to find no consideration at the hands of his fellow Catholics. Surely it is our duty to look out for our own, to lend them a helping hand, to get them employment and to strive to raise them in the world.

Catholics may mingle in the world with other men on general terms, they may form part of different sets or various bodies, but on the whole they are regarded by the general world as a race apart, as belonging to a community which they consider as more

important than any other of their associations. There is always a certain shadowy recognition that the word of Our Lord applies specially to Catholics: that they are in the world and not of the world. We ought to be the first to recognize this and act upon it. Whenever Catholics forget this, they are exposed to very great perils; they lose that strength which comes from union, and they fall helpless into the hands of their enemies. Sometimes a great Catholic majority in a country forgets the bond of their common faith, and the great body to which their chief duty binds them; they think more of the less important bonds which connect them to various political, or commercial, or social, or national communities; as Catholics they become disorganized and demoralized, and they allow a resolute minority to tyrannize over them and deprive them of their most precious rights. On the other hand there are instances of Catholic minorities which have been welded into compactness by a common oppression, which, in all political combinations and differences of opinion, have held firmly above all to union with their religious brethren, and which by their constancy to one principle have been victorious over the mightiest enemies, and have broken the power of their oppressors. "Do good . . . especially to those who are of the household of the faith." If Catholics always remembered this, the combined powers of the outer world could do but little real injury to them, either religiously or politically.

It is not to be expected that Catholics should always be of one mind on all secular subjects. "Many men, many minds." Characters differ so widely that a general and permanent agreement is not possible in anything except in regard to religious truth, and that only in the Catholic Church. But when we differ we should differ as brethren, with mutual respect and love, and recognition of the freedom which others have as to their opinions. It is a melancholy thing to see private enmities arising from differences as to secular matters; it is most calamitous and unchristian when such things are allowed to rend the religious union of charity between members of the Church of Christ.

IV. The importance of unity among the members of the faith is constantly impressed upon us by Our Lord and His Apostles, as well as in the Old Testament. The Psalmist sings: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. cxxxii, 1). In Ecclesiasticus (xxv, 1, 2) the con-

cord of brethren is declared to be one of three admirable things approved before God and men. When we come to the New Testament we find that charity takes a much more important place than before. Our Lord gave a new commandment of love unknown in paganism, and in its fulness not known even to the people of God. The Jews had heard the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; but our blessed Lord proposes a higher standard to be aimed at, His own divine infinite love, "that you love one another as I have loved you" (John xiii, 34). This love, while extending to all mankind, was to draw into still closer union those who are inside the fold of Christ. It was to be a distinctive mark of Christ's followers. An assurance to them of the divine favor, an evidence to outsiders of the divinity of the Church. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii, 35). St. John restates the same truth: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren . . . we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren . . . He that loveth not abideth in death" (I John iii, 14, 16). We have also the tradition about the same Apostle in his extreme old age, that he was ever repeating, even to weariness, the same words, "My little children, love one another," as being the chief law imposed on us by the Divine Master.

The early Christians learnt this lesson so well that their mutual love for one another came to be recognized by the pagans as their chief characteristic. Romans and Greeks knew nothing of love and mercy, they had despised such things as unmanly weakness, and they were astonished at the new virtues of unselfishness, benevolence, self-sacrifice, exhibited by the Christians. Pliny, in making a report to the Roman Emperor on the Christians of his province, has left on record official evidence of their singular charity. It became a sort of proverbial saying, "See how those Christians love one another."

In accordance with Our Lord's prayer for His disciples, the Catholic Church has always been distinguished for the breadth and the intensity of her charity, and for the union of hearts among her members. In the religious orders, not to speak of innumerable private individuals, there are ever-living examples of the perfect union of charity and of heroic self-sacrifice for the love of others. As in the early days of Christianity, so now, nothing does more to break down the barriers of inveterate prejudice than the unex-

amplified charity of the Church. Many have been won from heresy by this alone. Asked how they were led to become Catholics they answer, "Because you Catholics always seem to stand together like so many brothers."

V. Unfortunately, however, it happens that the virtue which is a special characteristic of the Church is very far from being the characteristic of every one of her children. Charity does not come easy to the natural man. Our debased inclinations *make* war more attractive than peace, hatred than love. Catholics are not all spiritual, not all worthy followers of Christ; even when good they are not perfect; they are not secure against the common temptations of men, they are liable to prejudices and antipathies arising from their temper, or nationality, or color, or education; grace and God's word do not extinguish among them all hostilities, dissensions, evil-speaking, the giving and taking of offense, conceit, contempt, and the rest. Some will look down upon others and refuse to associate with them; there are some who will never forgive and never forget an injury, even though it be some trivial and unintentional slight; jealousies arise between those who are engaged in the service of God, in public worship, or in confraternities, or in some organized work in the parish. Some wrong perhaps is done, some hasty word spoken; the injured party will not endure it even for the love of God, even for the memory of the Sacred Passion; injury begets retaliation, each uncharitableness leads to another, third parties become involved; there are sins innumerable, good works are broken up, the love of God dies out, religion declines, Satan is triumphant. How often it happens that some trivial cause leads to wide-spread catastrophies of this kind because Catholics have forgotten the law of love!

Few things are more scandalous and calamitous to the Church than dissensions among the brethren, nothing more alien from the spirit of Jesus Christ. St. Paul continually exhorts the faithful in his epistles to beware of such things. His great fear was this: "Lest, perhaps, when I come I shall not find you such as I would . . . lest, perhaps, contentions, envyings, animosities, dissensions, detractions, whisperings, seditions, be among you" (II Cor. xii, 20). Elsewhere he reprehends his converts for their dissensions. "Dare any of you having a matter against another go to be judged before the unjust and not before the saints . . . I

speaking to your shame . . . Brother goeth to law with brother and that before unbelievers. Already there is plainly a fault among you that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather put up with injury? Why do you not suffer yourselves to be defrauded? But you do wrong and defraud, and that to your brethren" (I Cor. vi). Let us bear in mind also the words of Our Lord about forgiveness, and remember that they apply with double force to those enmities which exist between brethren in the faith. "When you shall stand to pray forgive, if you have aught against any man; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive you your sins" (Mark xi, 25, 26).

VI. It is one of our most important duties to help in maintaining the unity of charity among the members of the Church. To do this we must consider the importance of that union for our salvation, for the welfare of the Church, and for the glory of God. We must cultivate the spirit of charity toward our brethren for the sake of Christ. Under the external figure of each man we should see the person of our blessed Lord; we should love and reverence our neighbors accordingly, mindful of the words of Our Lord that all which we do for them we do for Him. If we are at enmity with them we are separated from Him. In particular we have to bear with our neighbor, enduring his peculiarities, overlooking his shortcomings, putting a kind construction on doubtful actions, forgiving his offenses freely. And this must be done not only to those who do in like manner to us, but to those who are uncharitable, uncouth, uncivil, and who do not appreciate or make a return for our kindness. To do this is the real test of divine charity. Next, let us help our own always and in every way that is open to us; there is so much against them, there are so few to help them; on whom can they rely if not on their brethren? Especially we ought to help the great organized works of Catholic charity, schools, hospitals, missions, convents, churches, etc. In these days there are no longer great princes or munificent governments to found and carry on these great works as of old; their place has to be supplied by the continuous and small offerings of the Christian multitudes. This is one of our most important duties. Small though our part may be, yet we are helping by the smallest offering in the universal, eternal work of the Church, we are con-

ferring both earthly benefits and the benefits of grace on the souls of others, we are putting our possessions to the best and most profitable of uses, we are drawing closer the bonds of charity between ourselves and our brethren, between our own souls and Our Lord Jesus Christ.

XXVII. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH TO MAKE LAWS

BY THE RIGHT REV. MGR. JOHN S. VAUGHAN

"Obey your prelates, and be subject to them."—Heb. xiii, 17.

"Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law."
—Rom. ii, 13.

SYNOPSIS.—*Liberty the cry of the age. Men endeavor to get away from the wholesome restraint of all law. The right of the Church to give law is questioned.*

The Church is a visible, organized perfect society established by Christ to govern men in the spiritual order. She is independent of all secular power. Commissioned to teach all nations the way to heaven. Full authority given her by virtue of which she makes laws and passes judgment. Obedience a first principle among Catholics. Submission to religious superiors taught by Christ in word and example. Benefits conferred by the Church in the exercise of her spiritual authority.

The present age is a very restless one. Men are growing more impatient than ever of restraint, and are constantly seeking to throw off even the last remnants of authority. Liberty! Liberty! That is the cry that rises wherever a multitude of undisciplined men are gathered together. Laws are found too galling, and each one seeks to do "what seemeth right in his own eyes" (Judges xvii, 6).

Even the Church established by Jesus Christ to guide us safely along the path of salvation amid the errors and the heresies of a world "seated in wickedness," is not suffered to carry out her divine task, or to exercise her authority, without being challenged and questioned at every step. Men question her right to command, and to lay down laws of conduct, and would confine her power within the narrowest limits.

It will be well then for us, who have to mix with all sorts and conditions of persons, and to listen to every kind of sophism and objection, to consider the grounds upon which the Church issues her mandates, and promulgates her decrees.

Let us begin by observing that the Catholic Church is no department of the state. She does not receive her commission or her

authority from the people. She is not even an organism gradually grown up of the needs of religion. No. She in no sense owes her existence to the industry of man. She is a visible, organic and thoroughly organized moral body, established by the Eternal Son of God, while He was upon earth in the flesh, to rule and control and govern in the spiritual order, as a king rules in the temporal order. The Church, as founded by Christ, is a perfect society, and, therefore, contains within herself all that is necessary and useful for the carrying out of the stupendous task laid upon her by her divine founder. She is (within her own sphere) independent, and stands in no need of any external permission or direction for what she does.

Her mission is to teach the way to heaven, and to interpret and apply the law of God not merely to one or another favored people or nation, but to *all* nations. "Go and teach all nations." She is destined and commissioned to prepare and fit the hundreds of millions, subject to her, for a certain definite end, and must necessarily be armed with all the requisite means of doing so.

The civil government exists to keep order, to secure to each individual his just rights, to defend the weak, to promote the interests of the whole community. And for this purpose it is invested with the power to establish laws and to enforce regulations that may be conducive to the public good. A government if deprived of this power would not be a government at all; and instead of order, license and confusion would everywhere reign supreme. If this be true in the case of a civil government whose jurisdiction is so limited, how much more so must it be in the case of a government whose jurisdiction like that of the Church extends over the entire world.

When Our Lord established His Church He conferred upon it every prerogative that was necessary for the carrying out of His purpose. Indeed, it would be absolutely unworthy of God to establish a society like the Church, and to place it here among men, for a particular and definite end, and then to refuse it the means of carrying on that end. "All power," said Jesus Christ, "is given to me in heaven and in earth." And as the Eternal Father sent Him to earth with full jurisdiction, so He in His turn passed it on to the Apostles, and to those who should hereafter rule the Church in His place. "As the Father hath sent me [*i. e.*, with full jurisdiction], *so* I also send you." "Going, therefore, teach all nations" (Matt.

xxviii). Further, He gave them full authority, so that any man who refused to obey them was to be treated as reprobate. "If he will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen and the publican." This authority included, most undoubtedly, the faculty of creating laws, and of binding men's consciences, as well as their exterior actions, for the decrees imposed by the Church were to be recognized and ratified by God himself. "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii).

Now, as to the subject matter of ecclesiastical legislation, and the extent to which it can go in prescribing or prohibiting—all this is to be determined by the Church herself, who is the supreme judge of all such questions, since to her alone has been committed the charge of the entire flock. In saying so much we must guard ourselves against a misapprehension. We do not mean that the Church can make laws and impose duties arbitrarily, as though it rested with her to fix for herself what she fancies, but in the sense that she is divinely invested with supreme authority from above, both in deciding questions regarding her own power, and in framing and promulgating laws under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who has promised to abide with her for ever, and to defend her from all error.

The reasonableness of this claim is patent to all. Why, even the state, with all its imperfections and with no special promise of protection from on high, asserts its right to exercise this prerogative, and will never allow its own competence to be impugned. The legislature in every civilized country is constantly asserting its right to pass laws and to impose restrictions which it considers to be for the benefit and well-being of the country. It lays down marriage laws, regulates the liquor traffic, raises imposts, collects taxes, forbids the importation of goods except under certain conditions, determines the procedure of the law courts, makes certain offenses penal, demands a return of the individual's income, settles who shall and who shall not be eligible to vote at elections, and in a thousand other ways proclaims its supreme authority within its own sphere. And, so long as it confines itself to its legitimate limits no reasonable man will dispute its right. It is only when it trespasses beyond its lawful boundaries and arrogates to itself the right to interfere with men's consciences, and to prescribe laws

for the guidance of their conduct in spiritual things—it is only then, I say, that we denounce and condemn it, and refuse to follow its teaching. Thus, when in England, in 1534, Parliament passed an act declaring “the King to be supreme head of the Church in England, and that the Bishop of Rome had no jurisdiction at all in that country;” and when, in 1547, it decreed that “henceforth communion should be received by all under the forms of both bread and wine,” it stepped beyond its own province; and dared to encroach upon the ground occupied by the Church of God, to whom alone belongs the direction of men’s souls, and the administration of the Sacraments. Our blessed Lord very clearly laid down the limits of the Church and of the state, respectively, on the famous occasion when He confounded the Pharisees, who asked Him to tell them whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: “Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites. Show me a coin of the tribute.” And they offered Him a penny; and Jesus said to them: “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, Cæsar’s. Then He said to them: “Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt. xxii, 17-21).

Here Our Lord clearly recognizes and acknowledges both Church and state, and the right of each to exercise authority and to command obedience within its own domain. The Church and the state exist for a special purpose, but this purpose is by no means the same in the one case as in the other. The state is for this world, and for the present life; the Church is for the spiritual and supernatural world, and for the future life. And just as we should resent it, if the Church were to attempt to impose laws as to how we should light our streets, or build our ironclads, or train our soldiers, so we should resent it, as an intolerable piece of impertinence, if the state were to attempt to regulate divine service, and prescribe the ritual, and to forbid belief in transubstantiation, and to make it a misdemeanor to use beads or to carry crosses or *Agnus Deis*, and so forth, which was actually done in Great Britain in the sixteenth century.

But just as we must acknowledge the legislative power in the state, so long as it is restricted within its proper boundaries, so must we acknowledge, and indeed with much more readiness and gratitude, the legislative power of the Church, so long as it is contained within the much wider boundaries of its legitimate sphere.

Obedience to the Church has ever been considered the first principle among Catholics. To hear her voice, and to obey it, is to hear and obey Christ Himself. "Who heareth you, heareth me, and who despiseth you, despiseth me"—and this is the more important, inasmuch as her commands are but the completion of the divine law, and are instituted to enable us to fulfil it with greater perfection and exactness. A few illustrations will render that patent. Take, for instance, the Third Commandment of God, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." Here we are ordered to set aside one day of the week to the special service of God. But how? In what manner. If left to ourselves, we might introduce the strangest customs, or, very possibly, not pay any attention to the command at all. So the Church comes to our aid, and she prescribes the manner in which we are to observe the command of God, and to sanctify this one day. She bids us be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and unite with the priest, when he offers up the adorable Victim for the sins of the world, and especially for the sins of those who are actually associating themselves with Him in this tremendous act by their corporal and mental presence. How much are the faithful the gainers by this wise piece of legislation, and how many more "keep the Sunday holy" by reason of it than would be the case otherwise.

Or take another duty, viz., that of doing penance for sin and atoning for our many transgressions. "Unless you do penance," says Our Lord, "you shall all likewise perish"; and again, "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Again and again we are exhorted to acts of self-denial; but if the performance of this essential duty were left entirely to our own discretion it is greatly to be feared that the immense majority of us would trouble very little about it. We would put it off, or excuse ourselves on one plea or another, and nothing would be done. Therefore, the Church, lovingly intent upon our true interests and upon the exhortations of Our Lord, takes the matter in hand, and appoints both the times and the manner of our penance. She establishes certain days of fast and of abstinence, and imposes upon all her children a strict obligation of restraining their appetites, and mortifying themselves, during the forty days of Lent, the Fridays throughout the year, and on certain feasts and vigils. Indeed it may truly be said that all her legislation is really founded upon some law of God Himself, expressed or understood.

If she prohibits certain mischievous books in her "*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*" it is because God obliges us to avoid the occasion of sin, and warns us all against "loving the danger" (Eccl. iii, 27), lest we perish in it. If she puts us under a strict obligation of receiving the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, it is because He has said, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54). If she forbids mixed marriages, and only with difficulty grants dispensation, and then only on condition that all the children of such a marriage be brought up Catholics, it is because God has said: "A man that is a heretic avoid" (Tit. iii, 10), and because He particularly warns us that "other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus" (I Cor. iii, 11).

The Church could not carry out her divine commission if she had not full legislative powers, and her presence in the world would be of very little use to the great majority of men, who need not only the general laws enunciated by God, but much more their actual application to present needs and to the exigencies of daily life. Hence, St. Paul particularly exhorts obedience to the Church's decrees. "Obey them," he says, "that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they must give an account" (Heb. xiii, 7, etc.). Indeed there is hardly anything which so distinguishes thoroughly good Catholics from those outside the Church as the attitude they take up toward their respective spiritual superiors. Among Protestants an extraordinary spirit of independence prevails; they claim the right to exercise private judgment, to interpret the Scriptures as they please, and to reject every enactment of which they disapprove.

A Catholic, on the contrary, has to exercise docility and submission, and to bring his personal judgment into subjection. His position in regard to the Church is that of a little child before its duly authorized teachers. This attitude of mind is not a matter of mere counsel, but of necessity. "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, we see that Our Lord makes it a condition of salvation.

There are some indeed who make a grievance of this necessity, but they have none of the spirit of Christ, who was "meek and humble of heart," and who never failed to give us lessons of obedience, even in things most difficult. What are *we*, my brethren, compared with Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, who is as

truly God as He is truly man? If He, in spite of His infinite wisdom and power and dignity, was pleased to be subject to His own creatures, and not only to those who were pure and innocent, like Mary and Joseph, but to evil governors and judges, how much more should we, who are but dust and ashes, be ready to obey the authority of the Church, into whose charge we have been placed by Christ Himself!

Do we not claim Christ as our leader, our model and our King; and is His example, so much more eloquent than any words, to count for nothing? Are we to be proud because He is humble; are we to rebel because He is obedient? Or, shall we, in our arrogance and impatience of all restraint, forget that we are the children of Him, who in obedience to His Heavenly Father was born in a stable; who, when only eight days' old, began to bleed for our sins, whose whole life was a continuous mortification; and who died at last nailed to an ignominious cross. Perish the thought! Either let us renounce the very name of Catholic, or else curb our evil passions, and yield lovingly and loyally to the voice of ecclesiastical authority, feeling intimately persuaded, that in that way only we shall prove ourselves to be the true children of God. "Who heareth you, heareth me; and who despises you, despises me."

XXVIII. THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

BY THE REV. JAMES J. FOX, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Sacrifice—of adoration, of expiation, of petition, of thanksgiving—the highest form of divine worship.*

II. *Christ, at once priest and victim, offered to God a sacrifice of infinite value by His Passion and death.*

III. *In the Mass this sacrifice of Christ is renewed. By it we adore God, expiate sin, implore help for our needs, and return God thanks for His mercies.*

IV. *Obligation of hearing Mass imposed by the Decalogue, and, with more precision, by the Church. Evil effects of neglecting the duty of hearing Mass.*

V. *How we are worthily to assist at the Holy Sacrifice.*

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the very heart and soul of the religion established by Jesus Christ. In it, He, the Way, the Truth and the Life, fulfils to the letter His promise of abiding with His followers even to the consummation of the world. In becoming man the Second Person of the blessed Trinity became the bond of union between God and humanity; and as religion essentially is man's acknowledgment of his relation toward God, Our Lord instituted a form of worship of a character grand enough to express worthily the new relations established between the creature and the Creator, through the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.

What is religious worship? It is man's expression, in thought and word and external action, of his dependence on the Almighty Creator, and of his sentiments of obedience, reverence, love and gratitude toward the Sovereign Master of the universe, the beginning and the end. By what may be called an instinct of his nature, approved by his reason, man chose the action of sacrifice as the most solemn, the most significant, and, therefore, the most appropriate form in which to embody his worship. By offering up, or by consuming in God's honor, a portion of the fruits of the earth, and the blood of victims, he declared in the most emphatic manner that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The smoke of the holocaust rose to heaven confessing more impressively than mere words could do: "In the beginning, O Lord, thou foundest the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall

perish, but thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art always the self-same, and thy years shall not fail" (Ps. cii, 26-28).

The poor elements of ancient sacrifice, corn and wine and the flesh of oxen, were more in harmony with the poverty of human nature than with the majesty of God. In themselves they had no value in His sight, and least of all, could they serve to expiate the transgressions of sinful mankind. The Son of God alone, in the person of Jesus Christ, was to offer a victim worthy of the Almighty, and possessing a value adequate to expiate the unfathomable guilt of mankind. Wherefore, as St. Paul tells us, when Our Lord "cometh into the world he sayeth, sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me . . . Behold I come to do thy will, O God"; and the Apostle adds, "in the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. x, 5, 10). Once for all, our divine Lord offered up for the race whose nature He had taken upon Himself, a sacrifice proper to acknowledge the majesty of the Almighty; infinite enough to satisfy His justice for the sins committed against Him, and to return to Him an offering bearing a proportion to the gifts and blessings which have come down to us from the eternal goodness and love.

On the Cross of Calvary the immaculate Lamb of God, the well beloved Son, offered for us all the great ineffable sacrifice in which the Father was well pleased. The completion of that sacrifice was proclaimed to earth and heaven by the dying words of the Saviour, at once both priest and victim, when He exclaimed, "It is consummated. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In the tenderness of His love for us Jesus devised a means through which the great sacrifice of the Cross, though offered once for all on Calvary, shall be prolonged and renewed every day till the end of time, and in every quarter of the earth, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. He provided that His religion should possess a means of paying to God the supreme form of worship, and paying it, too, in a fashion worthy of Himself and of God. At the Last Supper He anticipated Calvary, and offered His Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine. Then He endowed His Apostles and the priests of the New Testament with the tremendous power to offer this sacrifice as long as there

shall be in this world souls to be saved through merits of His Passion and death. This perpetual prolongation of Calvary, the mysterious renewal of the shedding of Christ's blood for the remission of sins is, as you know, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the greatest act of our religion. It is the pivot around which all the other elements of the Catholic life revolve; it is the heart from which the power and grace of Jesus Christ moves through the members of His visible body, the Church.

Let us examine a little more closely how, in this supreme pledge of Christ's love, we possess a means of acquitting ourselves of the four great essential duties of religion. The first of these duties, as we have already noticed, is to pay the homage which, as His creatures, we owe to the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, upon whom we, and all that is, depend for our being. This homage, indeed, we offer in some measure when we acknowledge His majesty and our nothingness by a humble internal act of mind and heart. But it is in accord with our nature, that, as we are beings composed of a body and a soul, living a visible life in a visible world, in intimate indispensable association with our fellow-men, so we require, and we are bound to give, suitable external expression to an inward homage. Thoughts and feelings that possess any vigor insist upon being translated into act and deed. Love and friendship, honor and respect, are never satisfied to live hidden away in the heart. They must make their way out, in words and deeds and gifts. Now the holy Mass is the legacy of Christ to us, by means of which we may discharge this first of our obligations to God. Did each one of us own all the wealth of the world, to consecrate it to the service of God, or to consume it in a mighty holocaust in His honor, our offering were as nothing compared with the Mass. Here, indeed, is the sacrificial gift worthy of His acceptance—that divine Son, in whom He is well pleased. On the altar Jesus once more humbles Himself before the majesty of the Father; for us, He adores; for us again He submits to the all holy Will; in our name He says, "Not my will, but thine be done." In a mystical manner He again pours forth His sacred Blood before the throne of the eternal; and, infinitely more pleasing to God than all the songs of cherubim and seraphim, that Blood rises up with unspeakable efficacy, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of the majesty of thy glory."

The next essential duty of religion is to acknowledge our sin-

fulness and to endeavor to offer some expiation for it. Without the abiding sense of sin and unworthiness there can be no real religion in the soul of man. As the shadow follows the substance, so does a profound sense of our own guilt and wickedness accompany our thoughts of God's unapproachable holiness. No matter how comparatively innocent the constant sentiment of the soul that places itself in God's presence is: "Against Thee have I sinned, O God, and my sin is always before me. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Ps. ii, 50). And in this mood we experience the need of seeking some means to supplement our own unworthiness to reinforce our prayer, in order that God's mercy may be touched in our behalf. This contrite heart is in itself the first step toward atonement, for a contrite and humble heart God will not despise. But this personal expiation has value only through the great atonement operated by Jesus Christ. He is, as St. John says, the propitiation for the sins of the world; He hath borne our infirmities and by His stripes we all are healed.

Which of us can turn to God without experiencing this sense of guiltiness? What is it that makes us dread death but the appalling prospect of having to give an account of our lives to Him in whose sight even the angels are not pure? And as we shrink at the thought of that dread ordeal, we long for some powerful being to plead our cause. Conscious of our weakness, and convinced of our poverty, we know that no multiplication of penance, not even the immolation of our life, would adequately satisfy for the offenses we have committed against the Sovereign Majesty. In the Mass, however, each one of us has an infinite satisfaction to present to God for his personal account. Through it, if we will, Jesus Christ satisfies the divine justice for us, and invokes upon our head mercy and pardon.

Not for ourselves alone are the fountains of the Saviour's merits available. The souls of the departed, expiating their temporal debt in the prison of God's justice, can obtain solace and a shortening of their punishment from the holy sacrifice, if we, according to the designs of Christ, apply His merits to them. From beyond the tomb comes the call of distress, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, for the hand of the Lord is heavy upon me." The Lord awaits only our co-operation to extend this mercy to those whom He loves so tenderly.

For us, in the Mass, Jesus again stretches forth His arms to His heavenly Father. Over the whole earth the great high priest of the new and eternal Testament enters again into the holy of holies to plead with God for the living and the dead. Once again, for the sinners around the altar He raises His voice in supplication, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The holy sacrifice will not, indeed, as you understand, directly remit mortal sin; for that we must betake ourselves to the Sacrament of Penance. But it can and will, if we avail ourselves of it, obtain for us the grace to repent, and the equally necessary grace of perseverance. For us, too, it will obtain remission of some of the temporal punishment to be undergone, either in this world or the next, even for sin that is forgiven. In the Mass our blessed Lord begs for us the grace of efficacious sorrow, and God on account of the merits and the sacrifice of His beloved Son permits His mercy to overcome His justice, accepts the innocent victim as an equivalent for the debts that we owe and never could cancel.

A third duty of religion, which is also a necessity for salvation, is to beg of God the other graces that we need to fulfil His will and conquer temptation. If we ask properly for what we require, both for soul and body, we shall not ask in vain. But how shall we ask properly? Jesus has taught us: "Amen, amen, I say to you. If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you" (John xvi, 23). But Our Lord has not merely empowered us to invoke His name; He has provided the way by which we may enlist His personal co-operation with us, not merely to join in our prayer, but to make it His very own. He, the self-same in the eucharistic elements and in His glorified humanity at the right hand of the Father, prays in our name, pleads our cause, and once more presents on our behalf the merits of His life and death. To the sacrificial petition of His divine Son, God can refuse us nothing that is for our welfare.

Finally, another duty of religion is to return to God gratitude and thanksgiving for all the benefits and mercies that He has bestowed on us. Gratitude for favor and benefits is a natural impulse. And is not the number and the measure of God's favors to us beyond all calculation? What have we that we have not received from Him? To Him we owe our life, and all that makes life dear. When we would acquit ourselves of this duty, we may say with the Psalmist, in despair of finding anything worthy to offer as a token of our

gratitude: "What shall I return for all that He has given to me?" (Ps. cxv). The ancient law and pagan religions piled on their altars all sorts of thanksgiving sacrifices. But only the sacrifice of the Cross was worthy of the almighty love and goodness. In the Mass again Christ places Himself at our service to discharge this debt, to return adequate thanks to God for all the blessings that we have received from His almighty hand. Thus the sublime action of the Mass is, in every respect, the greatest and truest worship that can be paid by man to the Creator. Alone it is worthy of His Sovereign Majesty. By it the Catholic Church is enabled to adore the Almighty in a way that immeasurably surpasses any other worship that He has received from men since the creation of the world. It is the living bond of the communion of saints. When we assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries we are absolved from the limitation of time and space; we unite with the faithful throughout the earth, we stand with Mary and John beneath the Cross of Calvary, we are in touch with the blessed in heaven, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and with the just awaiting the day of liberation, with the entire Church on earth and in heaven, and with Jesus Christ Himself we join in the eternal song of adoration, praise and thanksgiving to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, to whom be praise and glory forevermore.

Since the Mass is the most perfect form of divine worship, and since reason and the First Commandment of the Decalogue imposes on us the obligation of paying honor to God as worthily as we can, it follows that, apart from any legislation of the Church, we should be conscientiously bound sometimes to assist at the holy sacrifice. The Church, by the exercise of the authority vested in her, steps in to specify and fix more precisely the bearing of this obligation. So she prescribes that everybody who has no reasonable ground for being excused shall hear Mass on the Lord's Day, and on the great festivals which she herself has instituted. In order to ensure, as much as in her power lies, that no one shall deprive God of the honor due to Him, and one's own soul of its greatest spiritual resources, she, putting forth all her authority, enforces this precept under pain of mortal sin.

It is needless to dwell on the importance of this obligation. You have been instructed upon it from your childhood. You know that no one who habitually disregards it can feel himself a good Catho-

lic. The world at large accepts it as test of our practical faith. The man who is careless about going to Mass on Sunday is regarded even by his non-Catholic neighbors as a poor, disloyal member of his Church. The neglect of this duty acts disastrously on the spiritual life. Faith soon begins to decline; the conscience grows accustomed to dwell in a state of mortal sin, and just when the soul is in sorest need of the grace of repentance it cuts itself off from the means by which that grace is readily obtained. If a man persists in the violation of this obligation he can scarcely avoid falling into other disorders. In short, the man who persistently neglects to go to Mass on Sunday, yet externally retains the name of Catholic, only too often becomes a white-washed sepulcher, fair, perhaps, to the eye, but within full of all uncleanness.

In order to fulfil our obligation properly and to obtain our share in the benefits of the holy Mass, mere bodily presence does not suffice. We may enter the Church, take our place among the faithful, observe a decorous behavior, stand and kneel, and rise again at the proper times; and even repeat with our lips some form of prayer—yet depart empty handed from the presence of Jesus Christ. For we may have been of those of whom He said: "This people knows me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Is. xxix, 13). Some persons assist at Mass without once calling to mind the nature and significance of the great mysteries enacted before their eyes. They believe the Church's teaching, that the Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary; they would lay down their life rather than deny it. Yet they remain, from beginning to end, cold, indifferent, distracted by every worldly or frivolous thought that flits across their mind. If Christ had ordained that you could but assist once in your lifetime at Mass, how carefully you would prepare for it! How piously you would attend it and endeavor to acquire through it a full measure of mercy against the day of reckoning! If the memorial of Christ's passion were celebrated only at one place and at great intervals in the whole world, how fortunate you would consider yourself if you were able to be present on that occasion. But because the prodigality of the Saviour's love has placed the riches of His merits within so easy reach we appreciate them all the less. Familiarity and routine dim the loveliness of our faith, and to overcome their hurtful influence is the first step toward hearing Mass devoutly.

As the priest begins the first prayers of the Mass we should put our mind on the nature of the great action at which we are about to assist. Remember, with an earnest effort of faith, that, through His minister, Our Lord is about to renew on your behalf His death on the Cross. For you He is about to offer up to God His sacred body and blood, soul and divinity. When the priest bends over the sacramental elements, Jesus will again ratify the words: "This is my body, this is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal Testament, shed for you unto the remission of your sins." In the course of the service recall the four ends for which the Mass was instituted. In mental union with the priest at the altar, and with the great High Priest present the Adorable Victim, to honor God, to ask mercy for your sins, to thank Him for all the benefits you have received. Pray for the departed souls that you once knew in this world, and who now look to you for relief in their sufferings. Finally, commend your cares and your necessities in the name of Jesus to the Heavenly Father, and in asking for favors observe the order recommended by Our Lord. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added thereto." Avail yourself of the help of your prayer book, but trust more to the movement of your own heart. In this way will your attendance become fruitful to salvation; God will be pleased with your worship, and your soul will go forth refreshed and strengthened for its daily struggle through the desert of this world.

XXIX. FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whoever will save his life shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for my sake shall save it."—St. Luke ix, 23-24.

"Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."—St. Luke xiii, 3.

SYNOPSIS.—*Bodily Mortification Taught by Natural Law.*—The most ancient peoples recognized the spiritual benefit of bodily mortification; including restriction as to food. The necessity of this for spirituality taught them by the voice of conscience, or as a tradition from the primitive revelation.

Needful Because of the Fall.—Man, before the fall, had supernatural or preternatural gifts. Result of the preternatural gift was that the bodily appetite could not cloud the reason, nor carry away the will. This harmony disturbed by the fall; hence the necessity of keeping down the desires of the body by mortification. St. Paul's description of the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit (Rom. viii, 21-24) and his remedy for it (I Cor. ix, 24, 25, 27).

The Law of the Church.—Church interprets and determines the mode of fulfilling the natural law by her "Commandments or Precepts."

Examples Followed by the Church.—The Church follows the example of the Church of the Old Testament, of our blessed Lord, and of the Apostles. Instances from Holy Scripture, viz., Tobias (xii, 8). David, Esther (xiv, 2). The Hebrew people. Our blessed Lord. Probable reason why He did not lay down definite rules (S. Matt. vi, 16-18). The Apostles and first disciples (Acts xiii, 2-3 and xiv, 22). Early Christians.

Benefits of Fasting.—Summed up in Lenten preface of Mass and St. Thomas Aquinas (2, 2nd, 147, 1), viz., Repression of vice; elevation of soul; acquisition of virtue; satisfaction; merit. Contrast between Christian and heathen austerity.

Need of Mortification for All.—Proved by words of texts. Substitutes for fasting and abstinence; viz., abstinence from drink. Almsgiving, prayer and meditation.

Bodily Mortification Taught by the Natural Law.—Many centuries before the foundation of the Catholic Church, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, the benefit of fasting and abstinence, that is, of restriction in regard either to the quantity or quality of food, was recognized by mankind.

The most ancient peoples have instinctively practised self-denial in this matter, not only because they considered it beneficial to health, but because they saw in it a means of subduing the animal

part of human nature to that nobler spiritual element which they were conscious of possessing. Moreover, they made use of this practise with the full persuasion that by it they could make satisfaction for their sins, appease the wrath of the Deity, and obtain blessings from heaven.

Nor were they wrong. Overloaded as were their religious beliefs with the most monstrous error and superstition, they yet retained elements of truth—truth taught them by the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God Himself speaking to us; or of truth that had come down to them from the far-off revelation made by the Almighty to primitive man—a survival, though distorted—of the religion of patriarchal times. This universal recognition, even by heathen nations, of the religious efficacy of fasting and abstinence, should be no slight argument in favor of the Catholic practise for those who so often denounce that practise as wrong. Could it be shown, indeed, that with the advent of our divine Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian religion which He came to found, that the practise of fasting and abstinence was discountenanced under the new law of grace, there would be ground for its rejection as a ceremonial observance of the Mosaic law now no longer binding upon us, or as a mere heathen superstition that we are better without. But when we find, as we do find, that far from being abolished with the old law, it was adopted by our blessed Lord Himself, followed by the Apostles, in use amongst their immediate successors, and, finally, developed into a law and commandment by God's holy Church, we are bound to see in the custom of fasting amongst all peoples, not a result of superstition and error, but of the teachings of the law of God written in their hearts; and that in spite of the superstitious elements that undoubtedly have supervened in the case of heathen cults.

Needful Because of the Fall.—And, in truth, dear brethren, the ability, nay the necessity of bodily mortification, of which fasting and abstinence are seen to be in the nature of things a most efficacious form, arises from the sad fact of the fall of man.

Before the fall, human nature, in the persons of our first parents, was endowed with two kinds of gifts, above and beyond what was essential to the nature of man as such. Some of those gifts we term "supernatural," or lifting man to a higher plane; the others are called "preternatural." The latter, whilst conferring upon us some endowment beyond what belongs to our essential being as

human, does not pertain to the higher, supernatural life. Thus, divine grace is a *supernatural* gift; immunity from bodily death is one instance of a *preternatural* gift. Amongst the preternatural gifts conferred upon Adam and Eve, was one which in theological language is known as the gift of "integrity." By this gift the passions were entirely subjected to man's reason and will. There was then no danger of the bodily appetites rebelling against the spirit, clouding the reason, and carrying with them that noble faculty of will that ought to be moved only by what is reasonable and right. Since the fall our passions and bodily appetites both can and do rise in furious revolt, hiding from reason what is right, leading our wills astray after sensual pleasure in all its forms. Not one of us, however good, is wholly free from the sharp struggle that ensues from the disturbance of that harmony which reigned in our nature before sin came into the world. Does not St. Paul cry out, voicing the experience of all who strive to serve God, "When I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members" (Rom. vii, 21-24). And in another place the same holy Apostle tells us the remedy that he makes use of: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." And in the same place he compares the Christian to an athlete in training for a race: "So run that you may obtain; and everyone that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things; and they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one" (I Cor. ix, 24, 25, 27).

The Law of the Church.—In laying down, then, detailed laws for fasting and abstinence, the Church is simply exercising that prerogative which, amongst others, pertains to her as representative of God and interpreter of the law of Revelation; the prerogative and the duty, I mean, of determining for us the mode in which we are to fulfil those general obligations that in our frailty we should be apt to neglect were they left without such determination. Thus she determines for us the precise way in which we are to fulfil the general duties of setting apart some notable time for God's worship; of making use of the means of grace; of self-denial and mortification. This she has done by laying down what

we know as "the Commandments of the Church," of which the law of fasting and abstinence is one.

The Examples Followed by the Church.—In regard to this law or commandment of the Church, she is following, as I have already intimated to you, the example of the Church of the Old Testament, of her divine Master Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Apostles.

"Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold," said the angel to Tobias and his son (Tobias xii, 8), and even to our non-Catholic friends who have rejected the Book of Tobias from their Bible we can bring this forward as a proof of Jewish practise. David fasted with prayer to obtain from God the life of his child. Queen Esther, when she "had recourse to the Lord" on behalf of her people, "laid away her royal apparel, put on garments suitable for weeping and mourning; instead of divers precious ointments she covered her head with ashes and she humbled her body with fasts" (Esth. xiv, 2). The people of Israel had their fastdays appointed by God; first the tenth day of the seventh month, and afterward, in the days of their captivity, the fasts of the fourth, fifth and tenth months (Zach. viii, 19). Our Divine Lord, though all-sinless, fasted forty days and forty nights before entering upon His ministry; and he did it for an example to us, and as part of His meritorious work for our salvation. It is true that we do not read in the Gospels of His having personally imposed detailed laws concerning fasting or abstinence upon His disciples; but He plainly foretold that they would fast after He Himself had ceased to be visibly present among them. "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." When and how His followers should fast, our blessed Lord left to the decision of His Church, who acts in His name and by His authority. We may well suppose that He abstained from commanding His followers to fast during His life on earth because of the abuses committed at that time by those of whom He spoke when He said to His disciples, "When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face; that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who is in secret will repay thee" (St. Matt. vi, 16-18).

That the Apostles and first Christians fasted we know from two

passages in the Acts of the Apostles. The first relates the sending forth of Saul and Barnabas on their missionary journey. We read that the Apostles and the "prophets" and "doctors" with them, were "ministering to the Lord and fasting" (Acts xiii, 2, 3). The other passage relates to the ordination of priests: "And when they had ordained to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed" (ib. xiv, 22).

From the early history of Christianity we learn that the example of our blessed Lord and the Apostles was followed; and that the practise of fasting, though it differed in details at various times and in various places, was recognized from Apostolic times as an important Christian duty. In course of time the duty was enforced by a law imposed by the divinely derived authority of the Holy Catholic Church.

Enough has already been said to show that fasting and abstinence are no empty superstitious observance, but a salutary religious practise, definitely approved by Almighty God, inculcated both by word and example by Our Lord Jesus Christ, taught by the Apostles, and in use from the beginning of her long history by the Church Catholic.

The Benefits of Fasting and Abstinence.—We will now more particularly enquire into the reasons for fasting and abstaining, and see wherein consists the benefit of them for our souls.

In the Lenten Preface of the Mass, Holy Church sums up the spiritual utility of fasting in these words, which apply, of course, to abstinence also: "*Deus, qui corporali, jejunio vitia comprimis, mentem elevas, virtutem largiris et præmia.*"—"God, who through bodily fasting dost repress our vices, lift up our minds, and givest virtue and reward."

"We fast," says St. Thomas Aquinas (2^d, 147, i), "chiefly for three reasons: First, in order to repress fleshly concupiscence; wherefore the Apostle says, 'In fastings: in chastity,' since chastity is preserved by fasting . . . Secondly, we fast in order that the mind may be the more easily lifted up to the thought of heavenly things . . . ; and thirdly, we fast in order to make satisfaction for our sins; whence it is written in the Prophet Joel: 'Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping, and in mourning'" (Joel ii, 12).

To sum up this testimony of holy Church and the great Doc-

tor, St Thomas—by means of fasting, practised with a good and religious motive, with due regard to the rules of prudence and discretion, and under the guidance of those whom the Church appoints as our directors in such matters, we repress the evil appetites of the body, and so destroy vice; we render easier, by repression of our animal nature, that approach of the soul to God, and that meditation on divine things which is so essential to sanctity, and in some degree, at least, even to salvation; finally we attain to virtue, satisfy for past sins, and merit a great reward which consists not only in the remission of temporal punishment, but also in a positive increase in that glory which we shall have in heaven.

Such are the exalted objects put before us by holy Church as a reason for the law of fasting and abstinence that she has imposed upon us. How unjust, how utterly unfounded is that accusation of her enemies which would make her guilty of recommending a superstitious and vain use of bodily mortification as being a good thing simply for its own sake; would make her guilty of the blasphemy, of regarding God our Father as a being who takes pleasure in the pain and suffering of His creatures—a Moloch who can be appeased only by voluntary self-destruction! Even in these days of so-called enlightenment this accusation is made, and made frequently; and the Catholic saint or devout religious man or woman who follows out the practises of our holy religion is compared to the ignorant heathen who mutilates his body for the pleasure of his false gods.

Dear brethren, it is not necessary for me to tell you how vast a difference there is between the practise of the Catholic Church in regard to bodily austerities, and those superstitious heathen usages on a level with which they are unfairly put by those who understand neither her spirit, nor her motives.

While we need not accuse every heathen cult even of entirely losing sight of that original reason for bodily mortification, the tradition of which, though obscured and distorted, is the only thing that can account for the recognition of the practise in almost every religion, yet that obscurity and that distortion have been generally so great that the primitive idea has been grossly corrupted. Hence, pain and suffering, self-inflicted, are looked upon by the votaries of heathen worship as ends in themselves; and their gods are represented as taking a cruel delight in those self-imposed punish-

ments. Moreover, no bounds are set to the savage frenzy with which such self-torture is indulged in. It thus becomes not a reasonable, duly moderated religious act, but an irrational mania. In the Catholic Church, on the other hand, the motives of self-denial are good; the use is restricted and moderated by rules of prudence that are founded upon the experience of saints and spiritual men for centuries past. All is reasonable and moderate; and extreme austerity is not permitted but in those exceptional cases where an inspiration from on high clearly calls upon some servant of God to suffer more than others in a mysterious union with the all-atoning passion of Jesus Christ Our Saviour.

Some Kind of Penance Necessary to All.—In these days, dear brethren, when life is lived in a hurry; when, for the majority, to gain a livelihood and to support a family means constant hard work and anxiety, the Church is very ready to release us from the obligation of fasting, and, in cases of ill-health, of abstinence also. But remember that the Church does not release us from the obligation of repressing our appetites whenever they interfere with the well-being of our souls; she does not loose us from the obligation of lifting up our mind to the higher things, of cultivating virtue, of doing penance, of storing up merit against the day of the coming of the Lord. If, therefore, we are unable to fast or to abstain, we must assuredly do something else that will take the place of this particular form of self-denial. To *all*, whatever their circumstance, our divine Lord has said, "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*." To *all* who have sinned He says, "Unless you do penance, you shall . . . perish." Something then we must do; and I will suggest to you as fitting substitute for fasting, if you are unable to fast, some good and holy practises. I say, dear brethren, *if you are unable to fast*; because it would be very reprehensible to excuse ourselves too easily, and without real cause, from the commandment of the Church. Indeed, we should not excuse ourselves. We should put the circumstances of our case honestly and straightforwardly to the guide of our souls—our confessor, and follow his advice.

If it be that we are really unable to fulfil the precept of fasting or of abstinence without injury to health, we shall do well to fix upon something else in the way of self-denial that we will faithfully practise instead.

And first amongst these substitutes for fasting I would place

restriction, or, if possible, total abstinence on fasting days from alcoholic drink. It is a thing that, unless exceptional cases, can be abstained from not only without injury, but with positive benefit to health. Moreover, in our own days, with the ravages caused by over-indulgence in drink visible all around us, there are special reasons why a Catholic and a Christian should set a bright example of sobriety. Next I will place the Christian practise of almsgiving. Almsgiving, dear brethren, I mean, which we shall feel. It is not much to give to Almighty God from time to time a trifle of money, the loss of which we scarcely notice. Almsgiving which makes not the least difference to our expenditure on luxuries and pleasure is not worthy the name.

Again, if we can not fast, we can pray. Some little addition to our devotional; a quarter of an hour spent in reading some pious book and lifting up our hearts to God in prayer as we read, is surely not beyond the power and opportunity of many who, perhaps, never think of employing their leisure in any such way.

Dear brethren, I repeat it; if we do not fast, we must do something; something that will be real self-denial, real penance.

And let us not think that this will deject us, or make us unhappy. No, indeed. By fasting and abstinence, if they are possible to us; by some other act of mortification if they are not, we shall acquire a spiritual peace and joy that those only know who take up the Cross and follow Jesus Christ; who, having suffered and endured together with Him and in union with Him, shall together with Him also be glorified.

XXX. EASTER DUTY

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, A.M.

"Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."—John vi, 54.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The prophecy of Simeon touching the infant Saviour verified in the blessed Eucharist (Luke ii, 54). Christ came for the redemption and salvation of all men. He did not come from the bosom of His eternal Father for the fall or ruin of a single soul. Hence the ruin predicted by holy Simeon will be brought on men through their wilful blindness and refusal to comply with the means left them to save their souls. They thus take occasion to their own ruin.

II. The negligence of men in complying with the necessary means of salvation is nowhere more clearly manifested than in carelessness in approaching the holy table of Communion. In this divine institution our blessed Lord left special means to preserve the soul in grace. The words of promise of the blessed Eucharist as recorded in the Gospel of St. John (chap. vi) is a testimony of this truth.

III. The outward signs of the Sacraments symbolize the inward grace which they give. They give the grace which they signify. Hence the blessed Eucharist, instituted under the form of corporal food, should be received frequently, as corporal food is received frequently to preserve the physical energy of the body.

IV. Frequent Communion was the practise of the primitive Church. And although the negligence of Christians obliged the Church to bind them by law to receive at least once a year, the spirit of the Church is still what it was in the early ages with regard to frequent Communion.

V. The love of our blessed Lord manifested in the institution of this blessed Sacrament should actuate His followers to receive frequently. Love should be the first motive in receiving the Sacrament of eternal love.

Imposing in its majestic grandeur the holy Temple of Jerusalem stood for centuries on the summit of Mount Moria. It was not the gorgeous edifice erected by the gifted son of David. Less magnificent in appearance it was also less favored than the Temple of Solomon as the repository of those sacred objects which told the story of Jehovah's merciful dealings with his people.

Lavishly furnished from an almost inexhaustible royal treasury; with the richest gifts of the gold of Ophir; with the purest marble from the mines of Paros; with the rarest silver and priceless stones, and most costly woods, brought by the fleets of Israel and Tyre from the farthest lands, that first Temple of God was specially blessed. There, in its inmost sanctuary, reposed the sacred Ark with its precious contents; the tables of the law, written in the

handwriting of God, and given amidst the thunder and smoke of Sinai; the miraculous rod, the symbol of the sacred priesthood and the coveted title of the high priesthood of Aaron; and the vessel of manna, the cherished memorial of God's merciful dealings with Israel—her deliverance from the land of bondage. These, together with the sacred fire, fanned by the breezes of the holy mountain; the oil of unction prepared by Moses; and the cloud of smoke which attested the presence of the divine Majesty—all passed away with the ancient Temple. But, with the absence of those sacred memorials, there was a blessing in store for the new Temple of Jerusalem which made it superior to the magnificent Temple of Solomon; for in it the predictions of Aggeus, the prophet, were to be fulfilled. The Messias Himself, the long expected of nations, was to appear there in person: "Who is left among you that saw this house in its first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in comparison to that as nothing in your eyes? . . . Yet now take courage . . . saith the Lord of hosts . . . and I will move all nations. *And the desired of all nations shall come*; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts . . . Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Aggeus ii, 4-10).

It was forty days after the wonderful things which happened on the first beautiful Christmas night, when in fulfilment of the Levitical precept, which required the purification of mothers and ransom of the first born, the Blessed Virgin appeared within the sacred enclosure of the Temple with the divine child in her arms. Then was presented in the Temple its Lord and King, who sits on the arc of heaven. And the holy Simeon, divinely inspired, took the King-Messias, and gazing with prophetic vision through the screen which conceals the future from the gaze of man, pronounced his solemn prediction: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted" (Luke ii, 34).

Let us pause for a moment and reflect on the prophetic words of this holy man. Let us try to bring home to us their significance. Christ came for the redemption and salvation of all men. He did not come from the bosom of His Eternal Father to be the occasion of the fall or ruin of a single soul. In His all-embracing love He wills that all should be saved; and His sacrifice on Calvary, making

full and complete satisfaction to His Eternal Father for all sin, was offered for all. Hence, the ruin that will come to many on account of Him, as prophesied by the holy Simeon, will be brought on them through their wilful blindness and obstinacy in refusing to comply with the means He has left them to save their souls; and by not accepting His grace taking occasion to their fall and ruin.

In no loving institution of God is this more manifest than in the sacred institution by which He gives us Himself to be the food and life of our souls under the sacramental veils in Holy Communion. In the clearest and most unequivocal words He assures us that we must receive His Flesh and Blood to be the food and life of our souls. Yet many there are, even among believing Catholics, who act as if this loving institution of Our Lord were nothing but a myth.

More from habit than with a view to its necessity they will appear at the holy table once or twice a year; and they will hold fast by the idea that they have thus complied with the necessary means to preserve their souls in grace. Is the soul, daily and hourly engaged in mortal combat with the powers of darkness, able of its own natural strength to cope with such mighty enemies? Does not the great St. Paul assure us that of ourselves we can do nothing against the formidable and ever aggressive forces of Satan? Does he not remind us that all our strength comes from above: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13). Hence, Jesus Christ instituted the Sacraments to be a means of grace, and to give the grace which they signify. Their outward form indicates their effect upon the soul.

Baptism, by its outward washing in natural water, inwardly cleanses the soul from the darkening, defiling stain of sin. Confirmation, by its outward anointing, as of warriors preparing for battle, produces in the soul virility and strength, which makes the recipient a soldier of Christ—a confessor of his holy faith. And so all the Sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ to produce in the soul the particular grace of which their outward signs are symbolic.

Hence, the blessed Eucharist, being instituted under the form of corporal food, is the nourishment of the soul, to strengthen it in its warfare against the powers of darkness, as natural food nourishes the body and gives it physical energy to perform the work which is natural to it. This Christ Himself gives us clearly

to understand in the sixth chapter of St. John: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you. Except you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi, 48-55). But it is of the nature of bread to be received frequently and constantly in order to supply the body with that strength which is natural to it, in his physical exertions. In that it differs from medicine which is used only seldom, as a remedy against sickness. Hence, the blessed Eucharist, instituted under the appearance of corporal food, was intended by our blessed Lord to be received frequently.

And such was the practise of the primitive Church, the people receiving daily the bread of heaven, as we are told in the Acts of the Apostles: "And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts ii, 46). This pious custom continued during those early ages which gave saints and martyrs without number to the kingdom of God. In those early centuries, when the heavenly virtue of charity filled the hearts of the faithful, it was the beautiful and pious custom for all who assisted at Mass to receive Holy Communion; and the divine gift was even sent to those who could not be present at the holy sacrifice. While in time of persecution, when special spiritual strength was needed to support the holy martyrs in their trials and sufferings, the faithful enjoyed the blessed privilege of keeping in their possession the sacred species to communicate themselves in time of need. But unfortunately abuses began to appear, as St. Paul tells us. Like the net of the parable the Church began to grow and to take in within her spreading folds all manner of fishes—the good and the bad. And when its members, no longer held captives in those gloomy prisons where the cruel fangs of the wild beasts, or the keen sword of the gladiator awaited them, began to build for themselves great palaces and mighty cities, then religion grew cold in their hearts.

Fraternal love, so beautifully exemplified among the early Chris-

tians, began to disappear, and the faithful less frequently approached the holy table. Even at an early date in the primitive ages the Church exhorted her children by worthy preparation to receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord; and she loudly denounced such unseemly conduct as rendered them unworthy to appear at the divine banquet, and thus nullified the beautiful effects of the Sacrament on the soul. St. Paul's severe condemnation of the conduct of the people of the voluptuous city of Corinth in not having due regard to the holy mysteries is worthy of note: "When you come therefore together into one place it is not now to eat the Lord's supper. For every one taketh before his own supper to eat, and one indeed is hungry, and another is drunk. What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye the Church of God; and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Do I praise you? In this I praise you not, for I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you; this do for a commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood; this do ye as often as you shall drink for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you and many sleep" (I Cor. xi, 20-30).

As the centuries rolled on, and the fervor of the primitive Church was gradually dying away, it became imperative to institute a positive precept obliging all the faithful to go to Holy Communion at least once a year, and that during the Paschal time. The twenty-fourth canon of the Fourth Council of Lateran says: "All the faithful of both sexes, after they have arrived at the age of discretion, shall faithfully confess their sins to their parish priest at least once a year." And the Holy Council of Trent confirms the same when it says: "If any one denies that all the faithful are bound

each year at least, at Easter time, to receive Holy Communion let him be anathema" (Sess. 13, Can. 9).

It is to be observed that the precept to receive Holy Communion, *at least once a year*, was occasioned by the negligence of the faithful in approaching the holy table; and that the spirit of the Church with a view to frequent Communion always remained what it was in the early days of Christianity, when the faithful, in the fervor of their love, appeared daily at the divine banquet. Of this we are assured by documentary evidence from the writings of the fathers, and from decrees of various councils of the Church. At first a law was enacted obliging all the faithful to receive the blessed Eucharist at least three times a year—that is, at the three great festivals, Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, and this was faithfully observed until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when, in the year 1214, the Council of Lateran limited the obligation to once a year—at Paschal time; and then under pain of the severest ecclesiastical penalties.

That the Church in her solicitude for the spiritual welfare of her children found it imperative to institute such a precept, should fill the souls of the faithful with shame and confusion. Why should such a precept be necessary? Is it thus that the gratitude of Christians is shown for this mystery of unfathomable love? Going back in spirit through the corridors of time to the room of the last supper and the touching scene in the Garden of Olives, on the memorable night of the institution of this august Sacrament, who could ever believe that the ingratitude of Christians should force the Church to bind them by a law under the severest penalties to partake of this mystery of eternal love?

What human phraseology can adequately describe the scene of the institution of this loving mystery and the circumstances connected with it. On the beautiful shores of the Sea of Tiberias a vast multitude of people, gathered from the surrounding districts and from across the sea, sought Jesus, to listen to the words of heavenly wisdom which fell from His sacred lips. The occasion was a memorable one; for He had on the day before miraculously increased and multiplied bread in the desert to feed five thousand persons. And now the same people in admiration of the stupendous miracle, by which the seemingly inflexible laws of matter were suspended, flocked around Him in astonishment at the wonders which He wrought.

When the beautiful glow of the early dawn appears over the golden gates of the east, it is a sign that the gladsome light of day is near at hand. And when the full and rich summer blossom is ready to fall, you know that the fruit will soon begin to ripen. So the miraculous multiplication of corporal food which the people witnessed in the desert was a guarantee of the fulfilment of the promise the Saviour was now about to make. When the excitement of the people over the wonders they had seen was at its utmost tension He brought home to them another miracle of the far and distant past: Their fathers ate manna in the desert and were dead. This food from heaven which rained down in the desert nourished their bodies only; but He would give them a food which would nourish their souls and give them everlasting life. And this food was to be His own Flesh and Blood. So the multiplication of bread and fishes by which He fed the multitudes across the Sea of Tiberias was to be followed by a multiplication of His own Flesh and Blood to feed the multitudes of the generations of His Church to the end of time. For He said in the words of my text: "Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi, 54).

Days flew by. The time was drawing nigh when the Saviour was to close His mission on earth; and He was to consummate the Sacrifice which was to satisfy for sin and to reconcile fallen, guilty man to his Creator. His last supper was in preparation. In His undying love His beloved Apostles must share with Him this parting hour. They are in a spacious dining-hall where they are to eat the pasch according to the ceremonial of the law. The shadows of night falling over the neighboring Garden of Olives, and the deep sighing sound of the wind through the trees as if in lamentation, added to the solemnity of the scene. It is not a time for playful words or parables. He is as a person making a last will and testament, and only the most serious words and the most clearly understood have any part in such a solemnity. When, therefore, He took bread in His sacred hands and said: "This is my body"; and the chalice with the wine in it, and said: "Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins," He gave expression to words which in the clearest terms signify the mystery which took place (Matt, xxvi, 26, 27, 28).

And then conferring on the Apostles the fulness of power which

was to remain forever in the Church to perpetuate the same holy mystery, He fulfilled the promise which He made at Capernaum, when He said: "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John vi, 52). The words which He spoke to them in all their sublime simplicity conferred the power on the pastors of His Church to perpetuate the miracle to the end of time: "Do this for a commemoration of me."

Such is the touching story of the institution of this august Sacrament. It was at the most solemn hour of parting with His Apostles before His death; He was publishing His last will and testament: "*Do this for a commemoration of me*"; He was giving a pledge of His eternal love and of future happiness; and He was establishing a precept—a law. Surely then all the faithful should rejoice in enjoying the privilege of receiving this heavenly Sacrament; and there should be no such thing as delaying to approach the holy table until such a time as obedience to the command of the Church forces one to receive Holy Communion. It is the Sacrament of infinite love, and love rather than obedience should be the motive which should actuate the faithful to approach frequently the holy table to receive the divine pledge of everlasting happiness. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John vi, 55).

XXXI. SUPPORT THE CHURCH AND HER INSTITUTIONS

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

"Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live by the Gospel."—I Cor. ix, 14.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*The nature of man and the nature of the Church involve the need of material support.*

I. With regard to essentials the support of the Church is an obligation of justice, not of charity. Prevailing impression of the obligation of charity. Justice binds under grave inconvenience. The danger of favorite devotions overshadowing more important duties. The expenses of the mission are first in importance.

II. The doctrine as enunciated by St. Paul. He has not received sustenance from the Corinthians, but has a special reason for waiving his right. His right, however, remains. Proved: (a) by apostolic dignity; (b) by special character as missionary to Corinthians; (c) by human custom; (d) by divine law.

III. The difference between contributing out of justice and paying out of simony. Support of the Church, not setting a temporal value on spiritual things.

IV. Unlimited sphere for generosity above what is essential. Motives for generosity: (a) greater glory of God; (b) emulation of the world; (c) personal gratitude.

The very nature of the Church and of the sacramental system demands that men and not angels should be the ministers of the mysteries of God. Religion being the tie which binds man to God must be suited to the whole man, to body as well as to spirit; to the body for the sake of the spirit; for it is through the instrumentality of the body that the spirit must make itself active in the things of religion. Doubtless God does choose angels as the ministers of many of His graces. But these are the extraordinary graces. The ordinary graces are conveyed by ordinary channels. The Sacraments are administered by men. The Word of God is preached by men. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered by men. But not by all men. The duty of attending to these mysteries is the most important duty upon earth, and so a special class of men is set aside for it in order that it may be efficiently performed. Hence the visible Catholic Church consists of the clergy and of the laity. The clergy are set aside from the world, chosen out from amongst men, in order that they may serve God's interests, in order that they may serve man's highest interests; namely, man's eternal salvation. "For every high priest taken from among

men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins."

And being taken from among men the priest is subject to the same necessities as other men. "He himself is compassed with infirmity." He can not live on the Word of God, but he must live by the Word of God. In addition to fresh air he needs food, clothing, lodging and recreation. He needs these things moreover in a degree befitting his station. His mission is to all classes, to the rich and to the poor, to the educated and to the uneducated. Consequently he must be so equipped as to be able to appear amongst all classes with dignity, and so carry out his ministry with the greatest efficiency possible. On the double title, therefore, of natural law and of divine ordinance there exists the right of the clergy to what is called honorable sustenance.

Notice at the outset that this right of the clergy is a right in the strict sense of the word. The sustenance which is due to them is due to them in strict justice. It is not an alms given out of charity. In this day of keen competition for a living there are of course plenty of opportunities where the charity of the faithful may come to the help of the clergy. There are many cases in which they may most fittingly receive help to which they have no right in strict justice. But these cases must be clearly marked off from that honorable sustenance which it is the strict duty of the laity to provide. In some countries this right and duty is emphasized by the fact that the funds for clergy sustenance are gathered in the form of taxes by government. In England and America, however, they are gathered in the form of what is known as "a collection." They are gathered in the same way as funds for charitable purposes. The amount is left largely to the judgment of the faithful themselves. Hence the feeling has grown up that the honorable sustenance of the clergy is a charity. This is a feeling which must be dispelled. The obligations of justice are on an entirely different footing from those of charity. The obligations of justice take precedence over the obligations of charity. The obligations of justice bind under grave inconvenience while those of charity do not. The duty, therefore, of subscribing toward the honorable sustenance of the clergy supposes a serious effort in those of limited means. It supposes an effort at least equal to that which is made to satisfy claims which have a more immediate sanction; the claims, for instance, of the landlord and the tradesman.

It is not, however, chiefly amongst those of limited means that this all-important distinction between justice and charity is unknown or neglected. It is chiefly amongst those of more ample means. There are many good or even generous Catholics who will give, but only to the specific objects to which their fancy takes them. They will build an altar; they will put up a stained-glass window; they will give a treat to the choir; but they will not contribute to the general expenses of the mission. It may be that they have some personal dislike for the priest who happens to be in charge; or that they disapprove of certain ways of parochial management; or that they have an over-wrought zeal in other directions. The root of their mistake, however, is that they do not realize the obligations of justice; and consequently whatever zeal they may have, not being according to knowledge, is dissipated and wasted.

Let this then be taken as a first and elementary principle in the question of supporting the Church and her institutions. Whatever is necessary for the due administration of the Sacraments, the preaching of the word of God, and the offering up of the holy sacrifice of the Mass must be provided by the faithful as a matter of obligation and strict justice. And the first necessity for these things is the sustentation of the priest. When this obligation has been satisfied then the faithful may direct their charity and their zeal to their more favorite devotions. Then they may give their attention to those thousand and one accessories of Catholic life and worship, all of which are directed to the greater efficiency and dignity of the afore-mentioned essentials.

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, lays down the divine law in this matter. He tells them that he has not actually received sustenance from them, but that there is some special reason for this. Yet although he has not availed himself of his right he nevertheless possesses the right. In waiving it, however, he will not create prejudice against his successors, nor will he leave the faithful in ignorance of their plain duty.

First, he proves his right by reason of his apostolic dignity. "Am not I free? Am not I an apostle?" From his general character as an Apostle he has a right to sustenance. He has, however, a further claim on the Corinthians in virtue of his special character as their Apostle. "Are not you my work in the Lord? And if unto others I be not an Apostle, but yet to you I am. For you

are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense with them that do examine me is this: Have not we power to eat and to drink." Besides he has seen Christ Jesus Our Lord. He, together with Barnabas, has been divinely set aside for a special apostolate. By divine right, therefore, he has claim to a stipend by which to live. Similarly in the Church at the present day, there are general claims on the faithful and there are local claims on the faithful. First, there is Peter's pence, which goes to the support of the papal household, and other offices which concern the welfare of the whole Church. Then there are the various diocesan needs. Then there are the foreign missions. But the place which claims our first attention is our own mission. Justice, as well as charity, begins at home. The priest who comes to minister to us in our own mission does not come merely because he likes it, or chooses it. He comes because he is sent by the bishop. He comes because he is sent by Christ through the Pope and the bishop. Just, therefore, as St. Paul had a special claim upon the Corinthians, so has the parish priest a special claim on his own flock.

Secondly, St. Paul proves his right from the authority of human custom. In every phase of life the laborer is worthy of his hire. "Who serveth as a soldier at any time at his own charges?" If fighting countries pay their soldiers who give up home to go to battle, why should not also the militant Church care for those who give up all to follow Christ? "Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit of the vineyard?" The vineyard of God is the Church. The Apostles have labored in planting this vineyard. Paul has planted and Apollos has watered. They have been working for God. Therefore, God, through the instrumentality of the people, gives them their honorable sustentation. "Who feedeth the flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" The sheep of God are the faithful of the Church. Therefore, from the faithful of the Church the pastors have a right to proper sustenance.

Thirdly, St. Paul proves his right by divine law. "Speak I these things according to man? Or doth not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses: Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care of the oxen? Or doth he say this indeed for our sakes?" To tread out the corn is to separate the grain from the chaff. This is the work of the preacher whose work is to discern virtues from vices, to point out what is useful for sanctity and what is vain.

"Thus saith the Lord: If thou wilt separate the precious from the vile thou shalt be as my mouth." Therefore, St. Paul maintains that he should plow in hope, and thrash in hope, in order that he may receive the reward of his labors. If he has sown spiritual things it is not a very great matter if he should reap a few carnal things. They that serve at the altar partake with the altar. So also "did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live by the Gospel."

In recognizing the point of view of justice, however, great care must be taken not to confuse the idea with simony. The support of the clergy is not a sordid payment for spiritual things. The service of the altar is not something with a price set upon it. Let us consider this point in the subject matter of stipends for Masses. In all countries it is the right of the priest to receive a stipend if he says Mass for a particular intention. The sum paid is fixed either by the bishop of the diocese or by custom. The money paid, however, is not for the spiritual benefits received from the Mass. The gifts of God are freely given and freely received. To attempt to buy or sell the gifts of God is the sin of simony. But since the ordinary channel of certain gifts of God is the priesthood, and since the priesthood is set aside from the world in order that the spiritual gifts may be the more effectually and the more expeditiously dispensed, then the priesthood must be kept in such a way as to be able to fulfil its duties properly. Therefore, when Christ says to His Apostolate: "Freely have you received, freely give." His meaning is, "Give without price, but not necessarily without stipend." To put a temporal value on an eternal gift is to offer an insult to God; but to contribute a fair sum to the support of the priesthood is to perform one of the most elementary acts of justice.

Nevertheless, the method of supporting the Church in England and America is a nearer approach to the method of apostolic times than that which obtains in countries where the Church is supported through the taxes. The Apostles ate bread which was freely given to them. They even worked with their own hands and thus earned their daily bread. This method of living, was, however, always regarded as one of expediency, a method taken up and tolerated on account of the exigencies of time and country. The Church was in its infancy and the multitudes to be converted knew nothing of the vast ecclesiastical organization with which we are familiar. The

Apostles, therefore, in deference to the weakness of the flock did not exact their rights—they would not even appear to be preaching for the sake of their own gain. But when such exigencies disappeared, then the Apostles preached their just right to proper sustenance. So it must be remembered now in these days, that if collections are made in such a way as to leave the faithful free to judge for themselves what is a fitting amount to give, the faithful have the obligation of weighing the matter seriously, of calculating not only their own convenience, but also the needs of the Church.

Just as in the sphere of spirituality there are degrees of precept and of counsel, so also in the sphere of temporalities. Everyone is bound to keep the Ten Commandments; all are urged to strive for the life of perfection. In the matter of supporting the Church and her institutions there is likewise this difference of obligation. When the necessities of the Church have been provided for, unlimited fields still remain for the exercise of the generosity of the faithful toward her. No definite rule can be laid down as to the order of the various demands of the Church which are not strictly necessary. The faithful will here have greater freedom in following their own inclinations. The important thing is that they should have some inclinations. It happens frequently that a man so disapproves of this or that institution that he has inclinations left for none. He thinks we should not subscribe to the foreign missions because his first duty is to the home missions. But he can not help the home missions because he has more than enough to do with his own parish. And, if the truth were known, his bench rent will probably be overdue. Thus excuses are made and the work of the Church suffers all round.

There are ample motives, however, urging us to take a wide view and to cultivate a generous disposition in our work of helping the Church and her institutions. If we are striving for anything higher than merely escaping hell our rule of life will be to do that which tends to the greater glory of God. All our actions will be measured by this standard. The work of the Church, however, is especially God's work on earth. The Church is the instrument which God has devised for the salvation of men. Nay, it is the very continuation of His own wonderful incarnation. To minister to the needs of the Church, therefore, is to minister to Christ's mystical body; it is the most direct way of ministering to God

Himself. If Christ were on earth, with what generosity should we provide for His ministrations! But the Church exists solely to continue those ministrations, solely to save sinners. There can be no offering, therefore, too good that we can make to the Church in order to enable her the better to carry on her work.

Secondly, we need to make special efforts in these days because the efforts of the enemy are so well organized and persistent. Secularism has summoned to its aid some of the best things that science, art or literature can provide. Theaters, municipal buildings, libraries, museums, technical schools and even railway stations are designed by the best architects. Shall God's house be served with a less worthy service? Poor law schools, reformatories, asylums and infirmaries provided by the state or municipality are fitted with the latest scientific improvements. Shall the few institutions which the Church keeps directly under her control fare worse than these? Oftentimes the call upon Catholics is so great as to make this a necessity. It is well, however, to bear the contrast in mind as a motive for holy emulation in the cause of God's Church.

Lastly, there is the more personal motive of individual gratitude. We can never sufficiently realize the good that is done to us by Holy Mother Church. It is she who first took us into her bosom by the holy rite of Baptism. It is she who has confirmed us against our life-long enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is she who feeds us with Christ's sacred body and unlooses us from our sins when we have turned away from God. It is she who keeps up the succession of the priesthood to offer sacrifice for us and to carry God's Sacraments to us. It is she who protects and sanctifies the marriage tie and ensures that family happiness which is the very foundation of society. And it is she who is ever ready to help and console us in our last hour. When all earthly occupations have no meaning for us, when we are in our last extremity with naught to lean upon and no one to look to, then Holy Church obliges her priests to come to us. She sends them forth from their presbyteries; whether it be day or night; whether they be ill or well; whether we are suffering from infectious disease or not, the only thought of Holy Church is our everlasting welfare. For this she will make any sacrifice whatsoever. The very least, therefore, that we can do in gratitude is the best that we can in meeting her demands upon our material resources.

XXXII. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

BY THE REV. J. W. SULLIVAN

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and his disciples to the marriage."—John ii, 1, 2.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—Our Lord was present at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, to show how great a blessing He brings to the marriages He favors. He will bless every marriage contract according to the laws of His spouse, the Church.

I. Requirements.—(a) A vocation to the married state is necessary. (b) Care must be exercised in the choice of a life partner. (c) A pure and holy intention must be brought to the marriage. (d) Sacramental Confession and Communion are needed to secure the state of grace. (e) Consult with parents and confessor; also with the pastor, to see if parties are sufficiently instructed, if any obstacles to the marriage exist and to make the proper arrangements in time.

II. Impediments and dispensations.—Church's right to make the law and to dispense therefrom. After a correct statement of the obstacles has been made and legitimate reasons for a dispensation have been advanced, the bishop will grant the dispensation if he thinks proper.

III. Banns.—The publication of the banns was established by the Council of Trent. The announcement is to be made on three consecutive Sundays or holy days, during Mass. The acceptance of this requirement is an indication of obedience to the Church and of freedom to marry. There is an obligation on all to reveal any and all impediments to the marriage which are known to exist, that an unlawful or invalid marriage might be prevented.

Conclusion.—Future happiness depends upon the observance of the law. Example of Elizabeth and Zachary, of Raphael and Tobias. Follow their footsteps and be assured that Christ will be among the guests at your nuptials.

No greater blessing could have been bestowed upon the young couple of Cana than to have had Jesus and His mother at their nuptials. And the happy effects of the presence of Jesus at the marriage in Cana of Galilee are recorded to show us how supreme a blessing He brings to the marriages which He favors.

Could those who are about to enter the married state be more honored by the presence of any guest than by that of Jesus and His mother? Could they secure a stronger assurance of a happy future than by humbly inviting the Master and His beloved one to their wedding? Could they have a surer guarantee of obtaining His favor, of securing his presence, than by fulfilling the law, obeying

the directions of His holy spouse—the Church? “As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John xv, 4).

Marriage with Christians is a Sacrament and needs a most careful preparation. Perhaps no Sacrament received unworthily, or in ignorance of the proper conditions, is productive of more serious or more far-reaching and unhappy consequences in this life. A knowledge of the requirements necessary before entering upon the married state, of the circumstances or hindrances likely to render a marriage contract unlawful or invalid, of the reasons for publishing the banns of matrimony, is necessary for all the faithful.

Who will undertake a line of business in which he feels certain of failure? Who will take up a profession, or who will enter upon a state of life, for which he realizes that his talents, or his tastes, or his inclinations utterly unfit him? In other words, a vocation, as we call it, is necessary. There is such a thing as a vocation for the married state, and without it it is impossible to fulfil the duties belonging to that state. Mental and physical defects are, as you know, often hereditary. Yet, how many, desirous of marrying, have plunged headlong into that holy state, with health neither of body nor of mind! How many have brought forth children to woe and misery, have begotten dislike, aversion in the partner for life! How many have taken unto themselves a wife, and have been guilty thereby of sinful imprudence in not seriously considering beforehand the duty assumed of reasonably providing for wife and children, in not realizing that a woman and her offspring should not be reduced heedlessly to a life-long struggle with hunger, poverty, want and ignorance! And these dire results are due to want of a vocation to this particular state of life.

The marriage contract unites the contracting parties in the permanent bond of wedlock. A prime corollary of this principle is that great care should be exercised in the choice of a life partner. Beauty of body, social position, wealth may be considered, but they should not be the only considerations, for to make them so is to expose oneself to the greatest danger of misery. There can be no happiness where mutual affection has been bartered for worldly wealth, a child's love for gems, a birthright for a mess of pottage. Allow passion to be guided by your whims and you are laying up a store of trouble against the future. “House and riches are given by parents; but a prudent wife is property from the Lord” (Prov.

xix, 14). "A diligent woman is a crown to her husband; and she that doth things worthy of confusion, is as rottenness in his bones" (Prov. xii, 4). Let the prayer of Abraham's servant be yours: "O Lord, meet me to-day and show whom thou hast provided for thy servant Isaac" (Gen. xxiv). Shall modesty and gentleness not be among the first assets of your proposed wife? Shall she who is respectful and obedient to her parents be overlooked for a pretty face and an insolent manner? Take him who is sober and industrious, and leave the handsome loafer. Take him who is conscious of duty and true to principle, and depart from the flashy seducer. Then fear not, there will be no sore hearts to heal, no disappointed futures to lament, no unhappy homes to mend, no households wrecked beyond redemption.

"Take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust" (Job vi, 22.) Bring to the marriage a pure and holy intention. Come to it with passions under control and evil habits laid aside. "Unhappy those," says Pope Gregory XVI, "who enter upon the married state from merely earthly motives, or for sensual gratification, and do not think of the graces and mysteries which this Sacrament confers and represents." Cry out with young Tobias, "Lord, thou knowest my heart. I take this maiden to wife, to sanctify myself in her and to raise in thy fear the children whom thou mayest give us, that they may bless thy name forever." "How happy the young men and maidens," says St. John Chrysostom, "who come to the nuptial altar with a pure heart! How true will be their mutual love! How sincere their mutual esteem! How firm their mutual friendship! How tenderly will that man cherish his wife who has never bestowed his affections on another!" And here it might be well to suggest that engagements should not be unduly long, for it does not take years to understand each other's chief characteristics. Long engagements do not always result in happy unions; they are a severe tax on the virtue of both parties; the intimacies they permit may expose to sin, and they do not, under any circumstances, constitute the married state.

It is only those who conform to the laws of the Church and receive the Sacrament with right dispositions, that receive the spiritual benefits and sacramental graces which Matrimony was instituted to convey to the worthy recipient. Endeavor then, by works of charity and mercy, by a sincere and sacramental Confes-

sion, by the reception of the holy Eucharist on the wedding morning, to procure God's favor. You will spend weeks and months preparing your dresses, you will give much time and serious consideration to the decoration of your homes for the reception of guests on the marriage day, will you give no thought or a mere passing thought to the Guest of guests? Will you send no invitation to Him who blessed the marriage in Cana of Galilee? Will you blush for shame at the example of Tobias and Sara: "We are the children of saints and we must not be joined together like heathens who know not God" (Job viii, 5).

Having assured yourself that you are called to the married state, having sought to know for whom God has destined you, having likewise put aside all vain or unworthy motives, consult those who are in a position to give you wholesome direction. "My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done" (Ecclus. xxxii, 24). Temporal and eternal ruin have followed the neglect of this divine injunction. Take counsel with your parents, who are for you the representatives of God. In such an important affair you should benefit by their wide experience and wisdom. Where passion, or whim, or ignorance may influence you, reason calm and dignified will guide them who have your best interests at heart. Consult your confessor that you may have the results of his knowledge. Much proper advice can he give, and much caution against the temptations and difficulties that will present themselves. Finally, consult your pastor.

In order that this Sacrament may bring upon its recipients its own special and proper graces, it must be received according to the laws of the Church. The authority to legislate in this important matter is vested in the legitimate successors of the Apostles, the bishops, with the Pope at their head. "The Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God" (Acts xx, 28). By virtue of this authority, so clearly set forth in Scripture, the Church has made stringent laws to check the caprices and passions of men, to render marriage conformable to what decency and the light of nature prescribes, and to hinder it from being prejudicial to good morals or detrimental to society. Hence, the necessity of seeing and consulting with your pastor at the earliest possible date after determining to marry.

The lawyer is examined before being allowed to plead at the bar; the physician must pass his examination before being licensed

to practise; the civil service candidate must prove his efficiency before securing a position. And will they who are taking one of the most serious steps of their lives go ahead without giving evidence of a sufficient knowledge of their faith? Will they proceed without a knowledge of, or a care for, those conditions which may render their marriage unlawful, or even null and void, and expose them to living in concubinage? Will they disregard that law which requires that the banns of Matrimony be published on three consecutive Sundays or holy days, from the pulpit of their parish church? Will they ignore the Church law that requires Catholics to be married before their pastor and witnesses, and enter a union which is no marriage? "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God. . . . Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii, 1 and 2).

For the protection of her children and of her Sacraments, the Church has established what we call impediments. These are of two kinds: the first kind renders the marriage null and void; the second renders the marriage unlawful. Of the former, which are the more numerous, some are absolute, preventing a person from contracting marriage with any one, such as Holy Orders or a solemn vow; and some are relative, preventing marriage with certain persons, such as a first cousin.

The Church's right to supplement the ordinary laws of nature with prohibitive and invalidating impediments needs no special defense, any more than the state does for her right to safeguard her citizens in the ordinary contracts of business life. If you are about to purchase a piece of property you will naturally consult an attorney to see that your title is clear; if you desire to erect a building contractors and architects must be conferred with, that the specifications may be properly drawn up and honestly executed. And even if, unfortunately, a proper spirit of obedience and respect for the authority of your spiritual mother the Church would be lacking, personal interest for yourselves and your children must lead you to see your confessor or pastor and lay your circumstances before him, honestly and fully. This is the surest way of discovering if one or the other of these hindrances to marriage exists in your case. It is likewise the most certain way of learning how you are to act if such impediments are present. She who has power to make

the law has also the power to abrogate it, or to dispense with it in particular cases. While the Church maintains these obstacles as wise and necessary protections, she realizes that there may, and often do, exist just and proper reasons for exemption from them. She, therefore, delegates to the bishop of the diocese the power to grant the required dispensation, if he, after a due examination of the case, thinks proper to so do. The Church, as our mother tender and kind, will not refuse a fair demand, but she requires and expects that a true and exact statement of the case be made, and the proper reasons for the demand be advanced. This is most necessary, for a dispensation obtained under false pretenses would leave the marriage grievously sinful, and might render it null and void. It would be more serious and more foolish than for a man in Chicago who wishes to go to New York to ask for and take the train to San Francisco.

The second means established by the Church for ascertaining whether any of the mentioned hindrances to any particular marriage exists is the publication of the banns of Matrimony. This publication supplements the other means of inquiry. These publications of the banns were established by the Council of Trent to prevent all secret marriages, which the Church always holds in abhorrence; to discover any lawful impediments that may exist, and this particularly in the case of those who travel about from place to place and have no settled habitation; finally, to permit those who have a right or duty to do so to propose their just objections.

The banns should be announced on three consecutive Sundays or holy days of obligation; the announcement must be during divine service and in the parish church of each of the contracting parties. Do not regard these publications as a censure, or as a work of disrespect. Do not consider them as calculated to bring ridicule or discredit upon the interested parties, nor as a class distinction. Rather are they to be esteemed as indicative of filial obedience to the laws of the Church, of respectful esteem for her wishes, of good example to the congregation, and above all as a mark of fearless innocence which does not hesitate to challenge the world.

So strong are the reasons for insisting upon these proclamations, so serious the consequences of neglecting them, that without a proper dispensation from the bishop, obtained for good and sufficient reasons, it would be sinful to marry. The responsibility does not cease here. These solemn proclamations entail responsibilities

on those who hear or know of them. An obligation, and that in conscience, rests on any person knowing of any lawful impediment to discover it to the parish priest. A neglect of this duty, which the Church expressly commands and publicly proclaims, leaves the negligent one answerable to God for the consequences of his or her silence.

Having indicated to you the requirements for entering the married state we can but exhort you both for your present peace of mind, and for the future happiness of yourselves and your children, to give heed to the voice of the Church. With the Apostles assembled in council she says to you: "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things" (Acts xv, 28). And she further adds, with St. Paul: "He that despises these things, despises not man, but God who also hath given his holy spirit in us" (I Thes. iv, 8). Does the conscience of any of you accuse you in this regard? Have you that are married lived up to these requirements? Is your heart sore and your soul weary with the weight of your own injustice? Come to Him like Magdalen, and wash His feet with the tears of repentance, and He will forgive you. His minister will do all in his power to rectify your mistakes and reconcile you to God. And you who are thinking of entering the married state reflect well on the things that have been said and pray long and fervently.

What pure and innocent loves existed in the marriage of Zachary and Elizabeth! What happiness of life, what unity between these two who were "just before God"! What joy, what content, what peace of soul will be yours, if you but imitate their edifying example by "walking in all the commandments of the Lord without blame" (Luke i, 6). Consider the words of the angel Raphael to Tobias and lay them well to heart. "Hear me, and I will show thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lusts, over them the devil hath power" (Tob. vi, 16, 17). As Tobias and Sara faithfully followed the advice of the angel, follow you the directions of the spouse of Christ. Their nuptials were blessed of God, and their marriage exceedingly happy and faithful. Come to this Sacrament with the spirit of loyal obedience to God's law, come clothed with the nuptial garment of grace, come with a pure and holy intention, and He who blessed the marriage in Cana of

Galilee will bless your nuptials with His gracious presence. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob will shed His abundant blessings over you that you may see your children and your children's children unto the third and the fourth generations. His benediction will be upon you here if He be given a place at your marriage, and He will call you to sit with Him at "the marriage supper of the lamb" hereafter (Apos. xix, 9).

XXXIII. SIN THE CAUSE OF ALL EVIL

BY THE RT. REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God."—Jer. ii, 19.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The beauty and goodness of God's masterpiece soon changed by sin. The predominance of evil. The fruitless effort to rid the world of evil.*

II. *The various categories of evil—physical, mental, moral, social.*

III. *What is the basic disorder? Who is at fault? God? Our first parents? God is infinitely good and merciful. These evils are due to our own deliberate sinfulness.*

IV. *The abuse of human freedom is the cause of sin. God's commandments, given for our benefit, are deliberately violated. Punishment in the natural and supernatural order is the natural consequence. Punishment of individuals, of nations. The witness of history to this point. Real happiness very rare and found only among those who live for God.*

V. *The useless efforts of man to offer a remedy. Not fathoming the cause he can not abate the evil. Religion can supply the only hope. The Church the only effective instrument for happiness, temporal and eternal. She alone can enforce the moral law, and thus save society from the evils that threaten it.*

I. It was a splendid sight that was outspread before God on the last day of creation. The world in all its fresh beauty had been gradually perfected from day to day. All things were in good order and accomplishing their appointed purposes. In the midst of the Garden of Eden was the being for whom all this work of power and wisdom had been done, the first of men, bearing in his soul and on his brow the image and likeness of the great Creator. Already each day, as God finished the successive parts of His work, He examined it, and pronounced it to be very good. Surely when all was finished, when He was about to rest from His work, He would review the whole and declare it to be good. But not so. For the work of the sixth day, the creation of man, was only the commencement of a career; man himself has to carry it on to completion during thousands of years. The work can be reviewed and the verdict pronounced only on the day of judgment, when all is over, when the human race have worked out their destiny on earth, and when each one has taken his side for good or evil. The work

of the sixth day could not be pronounced totally good, for much of it was to turn out badly. Perfect as creation was when Adam opened his eyes upon it in Paradise, the All-Wise saw that before long its brightness would be clouded, and its sweetness changed into pestilence. A plague spot was to break out in the midst and spread its venom and corruption throughout the whole. God's designs were to be in part frustrated, and the course of the future changed.

This evil was to take its rise, not in any inferior part of God's work, but in the highest and most favored; in these creatures that were made in God's image, dowered with His richest graces, designed to rule and develop this world, and to share hereafter in the divine glory. In this part of creation only, and not in another of the inferior parts, are we horrified by the sight of corruption, waste and distortion from the purpose of its creation. In the history of man, in all his works, in his progress even, there is always to be found a terrible amount of evil, frustrating and sometimes overwhelming that which is good. Whether we look from the supernatural point of view or from the natural, we may often be inclined to think that evil predominates over good, and that humanity on the whole has been a failure. Evil abounds everywhere, so deep-rooted, so wide-spreading, so intertwined with human life, that all attempts to deal with it are seemingly fruitless, that the predominance of evil seems to be unavoidable, and to be grounded on an unalterable decree which men can neither change nor modify.

II. Let us cast one rapid glance over the vast field of human misery. Think of the countless millions who now, and in past ages, have filled the great continents of this earth. Every one of these has been afflicted with evils, some of them peculiar to himself, some affecting him with his whole country, or with all of his epoch. Think of the multitude of diseases with their excruciating pains, their weary hours, their nauseous remedies, going on even to the extinction of life. Again there are great natural calamities full of horror, and dealing wide destruction; earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, inundations, tempests; famines, too, and epidemics, which, perhaps, destroy half a nation with every circumstance of horror and suffering. Then there are the countless and horrible wars of modern, and still more of ancient, times, with all their ferocity, ghastly wounds, cruel deaths, with the bereavement of families, destruction of homes, the breaking up of industrious communities, the laying waste of fertile lands and splendid cities, the outbreak

and rioting of the most violent and horrible passions. Then we may take the less hideous evils of bad government, neglect of the people, crushing taxation, persecuting laws, interference with private life, with liberties, with the worship of God; public robberies, the perversion and the sale of justice, insecurity of life and property, misrule, anarchy, civil dissensions. Again there is one word sufficient to raise up a picture of the terrible wrongs and cruelties of every possible kind—the slave trade; and, more horrible still whether we consider the criminals or the victims—the white slave trade. Of mere ordinary evils we may call up before our minds the countless sufferings involved in a hard winter; the thousands unemployed and hungry; the starving, half clothed children going through rain and snow and biting winds to their daily task of learning; the fireless rooms, the infant shivering at its mother's breast; the despairing father; then the long struggles, the loss of health, the premature death. Think further of the grinding labor imposed on so many thousands, the slave in the fields, the exile in the mines, the needle-woman in the garret; think of the anxious struggle for life and for the lives of others who are dear; of the existence without recreation, or joy, or hope; of the privation of air and of light, of sleep and pleasure, under which so many pine away their lives. And finally we may think of the uncounted multitude of anxieties, losses, disappointments, misunderstandings, enmities, frustrated hopes, the vindictiveness of private enemies, unendurable aggravations in domestic life, the loss of good name, disgrace merited or unmerited, difficulties, struggles and so on and so on. The catalogue of evils is really without end, and without limit to its horrors. Every now and then one corner of the veil is raised, some episode of forgotten history is brought to light, some unusual circumstance in a great catastrophe strikes the public imagination, some man of vivid speech details the sufferings of some few persons, and at once the whole world is aroused. But alas! there is nothing new, nothing unusual in the fact itself; such facts are always in existence; the only unusual thing is that they have for once been vigorously pictured and brought before the public gaze.

This is the weight under which men are groaning. This is the inexorable law of suffering, never in abeyance, never to be repealed, that dominates the life of humanity. This mass of evil seems to be beyond all our efforts. Many good and noble workers, now and ever, have given up their lives to struggling against it.

They have met with considerable success; yet the great bulk of evil remains great as ever and immovable. It is in a manner infinite; however much you take away from it still infinity remains.

III. Whence is this evil that has so desolated God's work of the sixth day of creation? What is the source of so much physical pain, mental anguish, moral corruption, social disintegration? Is it God? There are some who would blasphemously accuse Him of being the author of evil. They ask: "Why does God, if all-holy, if all-powerful, if infinitely beneficent, if foreseeing all things from eternity, why does He arrange the world so that all these evils come to pass? Surely He who holds the destinies of all in His hands could have prevented all this ill had He wished it?" Others, with less impiety but with almost as little reason, put all the blame on our first parents as having by their sin involved us all in a sin which we did not commit, and in punishments that are not due to us.

These complaints are an unjust attempt to shift the blame from our own shoulders, where it properly belongs. God is infinite and abounding in mercy, His beneficence is above all His works; nought but good comes from Him; even when He chastises He does it in love, and with the sole intention of our reaping a great good. Nor is it true that the sin of Adam is the adequate cause of all the evils of the world, or, perhaps, even in any sense the cause of them. These evils are due in great measure, if not entirely, to our own deliberate wilfulness and disobedience to God. "Destruction is thine own, O Israel" (Osee, xiii, 9). That evil which was done for us and not by us has been repaired for us, and not by us. As was our fall, such has been our redemption. If we have sinned and incurred a penalty as members of a family whose head transgressed the law; on the other hand, God has given us the credit, and with it the reward of the atonement made and the glory rendered to Him by our spiritual head, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him we have recovered all that we lost, and much more than what we lost in Adam. The curse pronounced on the human race in the Garden of Eden is but a blessing in disguise. It is not that curse which weighs so heavily upon us. Labor is the condition of human development and goodness, and even our happiness. Suffering is a means of purification and of merit. Death is the laying aside of that which is earthly and base, and the gateway to eternal glory. The Church goes so far as to call Adam's sin "*felix culpa*," a blessed transgression, because of the infinite privileges it has become the

occasion of through Jesus Christ. We should have little cause to complain of original sin, if we had not by our folly and wickedness endorsed Adam's rebellion, and persistently broken every law that God has laid upon us.

The sins of mankind are the sufficient cause of all the miseries of mankind; and the source of sin is not in God, nor even in Adam, but in ourselves. Adam's sin is not the cause of our sins. He actually was the first to sin and to draw down punishment. We are born in a state of sin through him; we have a proneness to actual sin through him; but we have powerful preventive graces, and if we commit sin it is through our own free will and choice. Had Adam not sinned, we should have commenced life in the state of grace, but still we should have had the power of choosing between good and ill.

IV. Sin must needs be. We should be mere inanimate and inglorious columns in the temple of God, there would be no such thing as moral excellence in us, no such thing as honorable service rendered to God, were we not absolutely free from all compulsion; and because we are free, we can sin and we do sin. The power of choosing God involves the power of rejecting God. Some will be lost because all must have the power of being saved. Sin and punishment will be, because of the natural endowments and the supernatural vocation which God has given us. Yet God is in no sense the cause of sin and punishment. When the sun shines dark shadows fall for the very reason that the sun is so bright; yet is the sun not the cause of shadows, but rather those obstacles which stand athwart its beams.

As sin must be, so punishment must be. The moral law of God is not a system of arbitrary decrees, artificially creating transgressions to which penalties are arbitrarily attached. It is a necessary, immutable law; it is a manifestation of the essential conditions of good, perfect and happy life; it is a direction to us how to avoid evils which wreck individual and social life. It is founded in the nature of things; it arises from the wickedness of our being, our origin, our qualities, our employments, our perfection as men, our ultimate destination. It resembles what we call natural laws—the laws of health, the laws of commerce, etc. These are precepts of action, which, we have found, must be observed in order to avoid ascertained evils; they are not arbitrary rules laid down by men or by God, nor are their penalties arbitrary inflictions; but

they are grounded on the nature of things, that is to say, ultimately on the nature of God. So it is with the moral law and the penalties which are its sanction in this world and in the next. There are impulses within us and without us which lead us to do things contrary to the nature of our being, prejudicial to our perfection and to our future well-being. God has not left us to ascertain these laws by experience of their tremendous penalties; for it is often impossible for us to trace the connection of these causes and effects on earth; and we can not discover for ourselves the worst effects, for these belong to the future life. God has, therefore, laid down the moral law for us by positive enactment, *i. e.*, through this revelation in the Scriptures and the teaching of an authoritative Church. God has thus furnished us with full instructions how to avoid evils, how to regulate our lives according to the best advantage; He has given us high example, natural and supernatural aids; He has warned us over and over again in His revealed Word of the evils in this life, and of the future evils which are attached to the violation of His laws. What more could God do for man than He has done, short of compelling him by actual violence to elect that which is right, and so to avoid the awful consequences of sin? After this He "left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added his commandments and precepts. If thou wilt keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity forever, they shall preserve thee" (Ecclus. xv, 14-16). But if man then disregarded the will of God his blood is on his own head.

When we make use of any thing without paying regard to its nature and its capabilities we fall into mistakes and do harm. Sometimes the neglect of a single law of life or conduct will give us reason to rue our act as long as we live. The visitation of the highest laws of our being, the persistent disregard of them all by a multitude of men, can not but have the most far-reaching and fatal consequences. And this is what men have done. All men in some degree, and a very large proportion entirely, have set themselves to break every one of these holy laws which God has declared to be essential to human life and well-being. Consider how few there are, comparatively, who serve God and love Him with all their heart and soul; consider the Ten Commandments and how unscrupulously every one of them is violated by blasphemy, false religions, desecration of the Lord's Day, disobedience, dishonesty, lust, violence, falsehood; consider the corrupt motives, the dis-

graceful impulses, the low passions that distort the hearts of men and guide their actions; think of the hatred of God, of truth and of virtue now the guiding principle with so many rulers, governments, writers and other teachers of men; think of the contempt shown to that great authority set up by Jesus Christ to guide our faith and our lives, and the many successful attempts to thwart her action; try to picture the amount of irreligion, selfishness, depravity in each man, each city, each country, in the whole world for ages past; do all this, and you will have a picture far more heart-rending, disgusting and hopeless than that picture of temporal calamities which we dwelt on a few minutes ago. The effect can not surpass its cause. Compare these two pictures; and who can say that all the terrible pain and misery in the world are more than the natural effect, and the just punishment of the horrible sinfulness of mankind?

We can not always trace distinctively the connection of calamities with the sin of which they are the punishment. The effects of sin last so long in the world, they take so many forms, they are involved so intricately one with another, one sin being perhaps the punishment of former sins, and the source of other sins, that we can not disentangle and trace the worst of each fiber in the matted mess. But to the eye of faith much is clear which others can not see; and even with our limited vision we may discern almost always that temporal calamities are the result of sin. Every page of the Bible teaches us this lesson. We have there the history of the rise and the decline of a great nationality. In all its vicissitudes of wars, and victories, and defeats, of changes in government, and succession of rulers, it reads not very differently from the history of any other nation. But we are shown the working of Divine Providence behind human events; and we learn thence, that the ordinary misfortunes of men and nations are the divine punishment of their sins. Personal sins meet with personal punishment, and the sins of a nation are visited with national calamities. We learn also that the law of God not only works spiritual and future benefit, but that it is the rule of our domestic and public life, that it is the chief element even of casual prosperity, and our best security against temporal evils. We may interpret the history of states and families by the same principle; and in the numerous calamities which afflict mankind we may see the vengeance for violated law.

Take most of the great scourges that we read of in history, wars, oppression, tyranny, slavery, national bankruptcy, oppressive laws, revolutions, civil discords—what are these but the outbursts of sinful passions?

Again, there are the evils which have fallen on this generation; not the cruelties of conquerors and tyrants, but the accumulations of wealth, the pressure of poverty, the difficulty of earning a livelihood, the fierceness of competition, the greed for money, scarcity of work, the oppression of labor, the struggle between it and capital, general discontent and insecurity, the threatenings of war between class and class. All this is due to nothing else than the neglect of Christian principle. Pride and ambition and contempt for others, covetousness, love of the world and of money, unbridled luxury and extravagance, and the pursuit of power and pleasure—these are the chief causes of those social evils. Had the world cultivated self-restraint, moderation in seeking and using the good things of life, generosity to others, charity in raising them up, and in sharing with them as with brothers; had men, in short, remembered to despise this world and set their hearts on the next, they would certainly have been spared a very large proportion of the evils just rehearsed, evils which have caused most terrible misery to thousands, and which threaten social destruction. If men had sought first the kingdom of God and the justice thereof, God, who is faithful to His promises, would have added all other things to them, even those temporal things which men are sacrificing their salvation and even their worldly welfare to obtain.

Consider the smaller miseries which often make life unendurable, and which cause more unhappiness than the great political evils that history deals with. Are not most of these minor sufferings the result of evil-speaking, tale-bearing, misrepresentation and calumny, of cruelty, intemperance, dishonesty, revengefulness, the ingratitude of children, resistance to control, the love of pleasure?

Further, the degree in which each man is affected by these external ills, whether they be great or petty, depends largely on his relations with God. Those who have learned Christian patience, meekness, under wrongs, contentment with God's disposition of things, resignation to His will; those who cast their care upon God, who trust to Him for their future, who seek comfort in prayer, who guide themselves by the example of Jesus Christ and the saints—they do not, indeed, escape from the stings of misfortune,

but they possess an antidote which neutralizes their evil effects, makes them easy to endure, and turns them to spiritual profit.

Real happiness is one of the greatest rarities in the world; and no wonder, because everywhere sin prevails. But if we were to try to search out the place of its retreat, where should we be likely to find it? Not in the exchange, or the warehouse, or the bank; not among those who are successfully making money; not in the haunts of pleasure and fashion, among those who have the spending of money; but in some forgotten corner of the world among a simple population whose lives are guided by religion, contented and pure; but more especially in the cloister, the ideal home of peaceful happiness, amongst those whose one object is to die to sin and live in Jesus Christ.

V. Many men, gifted with good intentions, but not with spiritual insight, have sought vainly for a remedy for the ills that beset mankind. They have failed because they have not discerned the real cause of those ills. How foolish have been their expectations of renewing the face of the earth by means of political economy, exclusion of commerce, the cultivation of the arts and sciences, literary institutes, and all the rest of it! These things may make men less brutal, but not less selfish; more refined, but not more restrained and pure; they may, perhaps, change the fashion of prevailing sins, but they will not bring men nearer to God. They who would effectually remedy the great miseries of men must go, not to the twig on which the evil fruit grows, nor to the branch, nor even to the trunk, but down to the very root. They need first to recognize that sin is the sole source of all evil, and then to find a force that is capable of dealing with sin and keeping it in check. That power must be more than human; it must be religion; not any arbitrary form of religion devised by men, but that system which was specially established by our Lord Jesus Christ, guaranteed by His word to be always capable of its duties, and furnished with means of grace adapted to all ages and to every class of men. No one who makes the most superficial inquiry can doubt that the Catholic Church exercises the deepest influence over the hearts and the passions of men; none can deny that the most exalted examples of virtue are to be found within her boundaries; the thousands of religious communities that throng the world are sufficient proof of this. The Catholic Church, as the most powerful organization against sin, and the most effective teacher of Christian virtue, is

then the great instrument, hidden, indeed, from the carnal age of unbelief, but still the great and the sole perfect instrument of social regeneration, of human progress, of temporal happiness. Going back to the days of Jesus Christ, and appointed by Him, the Catholic Church alone is qualified to teach divine doctrine, to enforce the moral law, to impart the spiritual life of Christ. She alone is capable of directing human society and saving it from the deluge of evils, the miseries of all kinds that threaten to overwhelm it.

XXXIV. SIN, THE SUPREME DISORDER

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth."—Job. x, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Sin—its definition; its analysis; (a) it is disorder; (b) supreme disorder involving insult, disobedience and intrinsic evil; (c) disorder not productive of any higher good. Therefore it is the greatest evil from the viewpoint of God, and from the viewpoint of man.

II. Sin, as disorder, (a) is diametrically opposed to God; (b) "sin is nothingness"; (c) is antagonistic to love and happiness and union with God, consequently there can be no heaven for the sinner; (d) can not be adequately atoned for by finite created being, hence the need of a Redeemer.

III. All this seen in the analysis of the sin of the angels; of our first parents; of our individual sins; of the sins of nations. Hell the very climax of disorder.

IV. Reflection needed in this life to convince the heart of the horror of sin. Description of sin by (a) St. Augustine, (b) by the Old Testament, (c) by the New Testament.

I. Sin is defined as an offense against God or His law. Let us go below this and see what it is that constitutes an act into an offense against God. It is plain that an attack on God by disbelieving His word or blaspheming His name is an offense against Him; and the same with disobedience to commands which He has given. If He has commanded a certain service at a certain time, or if He has bidden us abstain from the fruit of such a tree, or from labor on such a day, the forbidden action, though in itself not bad, becomes so because of the disobedience. But these classes do not embrace the whole multitude of sins. There are other things which are intrinsically evil without being obvious attacks on God. Even if there were no prohibition given, they would still be evil. God has forbidden them because there is an intrinsic evil in them that belongs to their nature. Such, for instance, are pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. What is there at the root of these capital sins which makes them evil in themselves, seeing that they do not seem overtly to attack God? It is this, that they are disorder.

This may seem, perhaps, a very moderate expression to use con-

cerning a thing which is otherwise described as rebellion against God, base ingratitude, cruelty to our suffering Redeemer, foulness, falling below the brutes, and such like. But the word "disorder" embraces all this and much more. It is not merely untidiness or disarrangement of position, which is the first idea that the sound of the word brings before the mind. But "disorder" is an adequate description of all that is evil. Peace, beauty, usefulness, depend on the harmony of the component parts of a thing; destroy this harmony, and so far the thing has lost a portion of its proper perfection and become bad. All things that God has made are good; evil arises from disorder introduced into their relations toward themselves, or toward their surroundings. What are all the horrible forms of painful disease that affect us but some disarrangements of bodily functions—digestion, or nerves, or blood, or brain? What are all the mental troubles—terror, melancholy, anxiety, unreason, insanity—but some disorder of the due harmony of mental faculties? Even things good in themselves may become horrible to us if merely disordered in position or in color.

God is the perfection of being. He is the perfection of harmony and good order. His perfections are stamped on all the things that He has created; and these are good as participating in and reflecting His wisdom, or goodness, or providence. "The invisible things of God from the created nature of the world are clearly seen" (Rom. i, 20). Good order in the lower grades of creation does not amount to their being God's image and likeness; disorder in that sphere, therefore, is not a defacing of the divine likeness, and it generally helps to promote order of some other kind. Thus, disturbances of the seasons, the killing of animals, diseases and deformities of the human body, are not of the same class as sin; they are not real evils, and they always are intended by God for good purposes. Relatively to a narrow form of good order these are evils; in relation to the general and higher order of the universe they are good. This is what is meant by evil where God says: "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord that do all these things" (Isa. xlv, 7).

There is another higher form of good order, of which God is the rule and model. Mankind has been made in the special image and likeness of God by the grant of intelligence and free will; and the likeness has been increased by elevating those faculties to the supernatural order, to communication with the word

of God by faith, and with the spirit of God by holiness. The truth and holiness of God are the law of man's good order; they are imprinted on the soul when it is raised to the supernatural state, and any disorder here is a defacement of the image of God. That which constitutes the special enormity of sin is that it is a devastation of the highest and immutable good order; an overthrowing in man of these principles and that harmony that exist in God, and that have been established in man as the principles of his supernatural life. The violation of this good order, that is, moral and spiritual order, does not subserve any other higher good order; it is simply opposed to the supreme good, and is therefore itself supreme evil. God, indeed, by His omnipotence and wisdom is able to bring good out of evil, and a good that will counterbalance it both in quantity or quality (else He could not tolerate the existence of moral evil); but God brings it forth not as a consequence of the evil, but in spite of it; so this can not be considered as a compensating good that is contained in sin. Sin is simply the greatest, and not only that, but the only pure, unmitigated evil in the universe. It is the greatest evil as regards God, for it is directly opposed to His nature. It is the greatest evil as concerns man, for it destroys the supreme good order that has been communicated to him; and with that it destroys all other good order, either in individual life or in society.

II. 1. The consideration of sin as disorder shows us how diametrically opposed to God it is. God is supreme order. Sin is not merely in opposition to Him, as disobedience is an opposition to a legislator, but much more thoroughly. Disorder is the contradiction, the opposite, the destruction of good order. And order is in itself the negation, a destruction of disorder. In like manner light and darkness are not compatible with each other. They can not exist in the same place at the same moment. Introduce light, and darkness ceases to exist; exclude all light and there is darkness. So there is no fellowship of God with sin; each is destructive of the other; the tendency of sin or disorder is to utterly destroy order; but as order is personified in the immortal God, its destruction is impossible. The action of sin is limited, then, to destroying order in a definite place; *i. e.*, to banishing God completely from the soul or other place in which it prevails. Hence, such expressions as the following are literally true: "Sin would

destroy God if it were able"; and "The sinner, as far as his will goes, slays God" (St. John Chrysostom).

2. The same consideration explains the word of St. Augustine, "Sin is nothingness." Disorder is not a festive thing; it is a negation; it is the dislocation of that order which existed in certain festive things. Darkness is not a festive existence; it is simply the absence of light, the absence of a festive thing. All things that exist have received existence from God; as sin is not and can not be His creation, it can not have festive existence. The state of sin in which an evil action leaves man is not a festive thing like the state of grace; it is the negation or destruction of light and life in him. Sin, being the contradiction of God, is opposed to Him in all His aspects. God is truth; hence the Scripture frequently speaks of sin as being a lie. God is essential Being; sin is the opposite of Him; and as the contradictory of Being, and destructive of it, sin is nothingness.

3. We may also understand more distinctly from the nature of the mutual antipathy between God and sin, how it is impossible for the sinner to enter heaven after death. If we represent the sinner to ourselves as humbly seeking entry into the kingdom of eternal bliss, and excluded by the anger of God, we shall make a great mistake. The sinner who refuses up to the last moment to turn in repentance toward God, enters eternity adhering unalterably with all the force of his will to this darkness, disorder, this spirit of destruction which underlies every act of sin; and, therefore, with all his will he hates the opposites; *i. e.*, goodness, truth, virtue, God. The happiness of heaven consists in love and union with God. How could the sinner love while he hates? How could his state of disorder combine with perfect order? If, by an impossibility, the sinner found himself in heaven, two incompatible and mutually destructive tendencies would be face to face, his sinfulness and the divine holiness; there would be a state of antipathy and separation, and not a state of peace and enjoyment. His habits of mind and soul would destroy heaven, for himself at least. To enter heaven would be a greater violence to him than entering hell; it would be greater suffering, for it would be more repugnant to his character and second nature as formed by his acts of sin, than even the terrible agonies of hell.

4. And further, we may understand how it is that there is such a disproportion between the value of our sins and the value of our

good works. We can do wrong, but we can not by ourselves undo it. We can offend God by bad acts, we can not satisfy for the offense by our good acts. Human action has a certain infinity when it is an act of sin, it has no such infinity when it is an act of atonement. How is it that both acts are not of equal efficiency? It is because sin and God, like order and disorder, are contradictory, antagonistic, mutually destructive in tendency. The reparation must have a proportion to the offense. To compensate for an act that is destructive of God there is required an act which in tendency shall be creative of God. Such a thing is beyond our power. All the service and the suffering of men and angels can never rise to that height. Hence, the fitness of the death of Jesus Christ. In nature death and decay give birth to life. The seed must die before the new plant can sprout. The death of winter must precede the year's new life in spring. As one generation passes to the grave, the next one, inheriting its energies and resources, carries on the work of life with new vigor. The ancients signified this truth under the figure of the phoenix rising into life from the ashes of its parent. The death of the Son of God is a creative action—it is an infinitely creative action, and, in its tendency, creative of infinity, that is, of God. That divine action was the only one that could be proportioned to the human action of sin; therefore, it was necessary for atonement. Sin in a manner destroyed God from the world, putting an end to the mysteries of His intercourse with unfallen man. The Redemption has, as it were, created God anew, giving the divinity a new form of existence among us in the most Holy Sacrament.

III. Let us now turn to various classes of sin and consider them as violating supreme good order.

1. The first sin was that of the angels. They had been created in grace, they were destined to an immediate entrance into glory. As free beings they were not confirmed in grace and admitted to their permanent state until they had freely chosen God as their Lord. A certain number used their freedom against God, and overturned the primary order of subordination to Him. At once all that was good in them ceased, except mere existence and their natural powers. All peace, splendor, tranquillity, generosity, love, gave place to the most horrible perversity, to a love of evil for its own sake, to despair, hatred, fury and remorse. They became hideous, degraded, malignant, false. The natural repulsion be-

tween their fallen nature and God's perfection flung them from His presence. Their abode is a condition deprived of all that is good, of all light, of all truth, of all order; a condition of supreme evil and misery. This is hell.

2. The original sin of Adam is in itself and in its consequences a disturbance of the divinely appointed order. In Eden all was perfect. Man was subject to God, acknowledging His dominion and receiving illumination from Him. The body was subject to the soul, sense to reason. There was no concupiscence, no inclination to make an irregular use of God's benefits. The inferior world was obedient to man—both the animal and the vegetable creation. There was no evil, no disease, no sorrow, no death. Perfect harmony and happiness reigned. Adam broke the highest link in the chain of subordination that bound God to the lowest creatures by disobeying the command which was the symbol of human allegiance. He withdrew his faith in God's word, his obedience to God's law. Straightway all the relations of creatures to one another were dislocated. The flesh revolted against the spirit, producing concupiscence; the intellect against truth, resulting in ignorance; the will against virtue, resulting in malice. The component parts of the body were disordered, whence arose disease; the soul became separable from the body, and thence came death and corruption. The animals saw in man no longer their master, but their enemy; the earth brought forth briars, and had to be compelled, in the sweat of man's brow, to produce good fruits. No sentence of condemnation was needed, in addition to Adam's violation of the primal good order, to produce all these kinds of disorder; they all followed the sin by a natural sequence.

3. The actual sins of each individual are the destruction of all that order and peace which still remain to him in spite of the fall. Every sin produces its own disorganizing effect on the body or the mind, health or property. Habits of sin are quickly formed by repeated actions, and these bind the sinner as with a chain, and reduce him to a state of slavery. The disorder does not die with the sinner, but is transmitted to his descendants in their liability to similar sins, in vicious dispositions, in a diseased frame. The principal calamities that afflict each man are the punishment of his own or his parents' sins; and if he has not endurance equal to his burden, that again arises from the disordered character which he has formed for himself.

4. Sometimes there are sins which prevail in a whole community and through several generations. Perhaps it may be false belief or neglect of religious duties. A sin which is only against the faith soon bears fruit in a corruption of morals, and this leads to a disregard of the duties that man owes to his government and his family and his fellowmen, and that nation owes to nation. Any laws of God that are widely broken avenge themselves in the long run. Evil principles develop evil results, and produce consequences not at all anticipated. Unjust laws, cruelty to a subject race, a prevalence of sensuality or covetousness, oppression of the Church, godless education, or whatever else it may be as time goes on it will be surely found that this national sin has sapped the foundations of social order and general prosperity. In this way the present world is suffering for the sins of past generations, and is heaping up wrath for those which are to follow. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the teeth of the children are set on edge" (Ezech. xviii, 2).

5. It is in hell that sin finds its climax of disorder. On this earth God never abandons the sinner utterly, evil is always held in check by good, and the virtuous few stay God's hand when He would chastize the multitudes. But in the next world sin is left to itself, to work its fearful havoc unrestrained in the souls of those who have made it their companion for eternity. The first resulting disorder is the loss of all object of existence, the waste of all those energies and faculties which demand unlimited exercise, and which are so formed as to be satisfied only with an infinite object. This will leave a void, the void of all goodness, of all hopes, of all interest, which will be more terrible than any positive pain. This disorder is the *poena damni*, the pain of the loss of God. Next is the disorder of the mind; the adherence of the will to evil that does not satisfy, the memory of past sin, with its folly and emptiness, the hatred of self and of God, despair and remorse of conscience. This is the worm that dieth not. Then there will be disorder of the body in all its limbs and all its functions, and especially wherein it has most offended God. This will be the pain of sense; and to this will be added the punishment at the hands of the creature that is armed for revenge on God's enemies (Wisd. v, 18), the fire of hell.

IV. Thus sin is essential disorder; it generates other disorder, and its punishment is the intensity of universal disorder that is

generated by it, and at last overwhelms the offending man, or the offending race. Sin is the greatest, it is indeed the sole, the universal evil. No other disorder is opposed to that supreme good order which is God Himself. Hell, the last and intensest form of disorder, is nothing else but sin transferred from time to eternity, and left to itself to work out its full consequences without hindrance from God.

We do not during this life perceive all the horror of sin; for it presents itself to us under the guise of some sensual or other fraudulent and unreal good; and also God is here, restraining its destructiveness, and giving us various good things which sin, without Him, would have destroyed. We can not picture to ourselves what is meant by the privation of the sum total of all good and the disturbance of every kind of good order in ourselves. The most we can do is to picture to ourselves vividly the loss of some one of God's minor gifts. Sunlight and human companionship are not much; yet men deprived of these for twenty-four hours, lost in underground caverns, have become raving madmen. A slight disorganization of the nerves is enough to make life unendurable, although accompanied by every other blessing. To be kept without sleep or without drink means a lingering and fearful death. That which robs us at once and for eternity of every possible good thing and above all, of God, the supreme and most necessary good, must indeed be a most terrible evil, one to be avoided at all risks. No temporary gain or pleasure that sin offers us can compensate for its future agonies. One mortal sin is literally more horrible than all the sufferings in the world from Adam to the day of judgment. Nothing can be more wicked, more foolish, more mad, than to bring on ourselves, on posterity, on the world, the unknown future consequences of such a destructive agent.

Let us conclude with three quotations. St. Augustine writes: "What the hail is to fruit, what the blast of the storm is to the trees, what a raging plague is to the herds of cattle, what a furious tempest is to the bark at sea, such is sin to its victims. It destroys the fruits of the good works, it corrupts the faculties of the world, it plunges the whole man into destruction." In the Old Testament God gives us the same warning: "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest near them they will take hold of thee. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men. All iniquity is like a two-edged sword, there is no

remedy for the wound thereof" (Eccli. xxi, 2-4). Finally, the New Testament says: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God" (Rom. vi, 12, 13).

XXXV. THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"Amen, Amen, I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."—John viii, 34.

SYNOPSIS.—*The hard lot of the sinner. Sinful acts create sinful habits; one sinful habit the parent of many others; then a long struggle necessary to root them out.*

The capital sins or vices enumerated:

(1) *Pride, the root of all sin; having also its special progeny of vices. Definition. Malice of pride. Ways of committing this sin. Four chief ways. Offspring of pride, viz., ambition, presumption, vainglory. Remedies against pride.*

(2) *Covetousness. A characteristic of modern times. The effects in society. Money. Worship.*

(3) *Lust. The nameless sins committed by slaves of lust. Need of self-control.*

(4-5) *Anger and Envy—already treated in this course.*

(6) *Gluttony—including intemperance. Archbishop Ullathorne on drunkenness.*

Only one remedy against all these things—Christian self-denial. Necessity of training children in this.

(7) *Sloth. A necessary condition for success in fighting against the other capital vices. Exhortation of St. Paul.*

How hard, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, is the lot of the sinner. By repeated acts of sin he finds himself at last enmeshed in a strong net from which, of his own power, he can by no means escape. When he first began to sin he thought, perhaps, that each sinful act stood by itself; that it carried no consequence with it that could immediately and in the present affect him. Eternal punishment, he well knew, was due to every mortal sin he committed; but he hoped for pardon. He lost sight of the fact that sinful acts develop into sinful habits; that one sin, or one habit of sin, brings in its train many others—and that, sin being added to sin, and evil custom to evil custom—he would eventually be bound hand and foot in strong bonds, from which nothing but a long and painful struggle carried on by the powerful aid of divine grace could release him.

No, dear brother, make no mistake; that first sinful act does *not* stand alone. It begins in your soul an evil disposition, an inclination, to further acts of sin. The second sin is easier than the first,

and the third than the second. After a course of sin, true repentance and sincere confession will obtain, indeed, forgiveness; but they do not at once destroy the evil habit that has taken possession of the soul. And then sinful habits are prolific—one engenders another. From one sinful habit comes forth a progeny of vices. It is not in the power of men to say, "Thus far will I go and no further;" "This sin will I commit and those others I will avoid."

This sad truth the Church has ever recognized; and her great teachers and doctors have pointed out and classified the chief habits of sin, or vices, with the black brood of evil that proceed from them. These chief vices, or sinful habits, which engender others, are known as the seven capital sins.

Parent of them all, first in the deadly list comes pride. Pride, of which the Holy Spirit has said that it is "the beginning of all sin"; and "he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end" (Eccli. x, 15). Pride, which changed angels of light into devils; which ruined the happiness of Eden and brought all evil into this world. To pride—that is, to the disordered estimation of self, all other sin may be traced; in all sin there is the element of pride, leading man to rebel in that he thinks that his will is to be done and not another's, even though that other be the Almighty God. Next in the list comes covetousness; follows upon this lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth—each a principal vice, bringing others in its train.

Let us consider first the dreadful sin of pride. We have seen that it is the root of all sin. But it has also its own special progeny of vices more immediately springing from it.

Pride is the inordinate estimation of one's self, and the inordinate delight in one's own gifts of nature or of grace. *Inordinate*, I say, that is, such a self-estimation and self-love as are unreasonable—out of accord with the truth and fact that all we have is not from ourselves, but from God who gave it, and who is the author of all that is good and admirable in all things created. To delight reasonably in the gifts of God that we possess; to have a due respect for our own dignity as children of God by creation and by grace, humbly acknowledging that all is from Him—that is not pride.

The evil of pride consists in this—that it takes from God what is His due. By the sin of pride we give credit to ourselves for those good qualities, talents, powers, which God gives to us. When pride goes so far as to reject absolutely and consciously the

supremacy of the divine Being, and of all superiors appointed by God, it is, indeed, the worst of all sins. Thank God there are, we may hope, but few in whom the sin of pride has reached to so monstrous an extent. But we can commit the sin of pride without going so far as this; and may, instead, sin mortally by our pride if it leads us to do serious injury to the rights of others, or leads us to the commission of one or other of the mortal sins which have their root in this great source of vice. There are four ways in which we may be guilty of pride: (1) By attributing to ourselves that which we have received from God; falling thus under the rebuke of the Apostle: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received it?" (I Cor. iv, 7). (2) By presuming that God has given us for some merit of our own what He has given merely of His loving kindness and bounty. And in this connection we must remember that not even our merits are from ourselves; for we first need God's freely given grace in order to merit any thing; so that in rewarding us God is but crowning in us His own gifts. (3) By flattering ourselves that we possess gifts and graces that we have not, or that we have them in a greater degree than is really the case. (4) By despising others on account of our own excellence, real or supposed; and expecting from others an amount of consideration and praise that is not our due. Thus did the Pharisee act, thanking God that he was not like the lowly publican.

From pride, as its immediate and direct offspring, spring the vices of ambition, presumption and vainglory. Ambition is the desire of honor and renown. It was the vice of the Pharisees, of whom our divine Lord said that "They love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men *rabbi*" (Matt. xxiii, 6, 7).

Presumption—in the sense in which the word is used in the present connection, is an inordinate self-trust, shown in rashly meditating offices or tasks that are beyond our capabilities, or in placing ourselves in a position of temptation that we have no right to suppose our virtue capable of resisting.

Vainglory, perhaps the commonest manifestation of a proud spirit, consists in an immoderate desire to exhibit to others our gifts and good qualities; and to obtain praise and admiration. Alas! how many Christians must plead guilty to this sin; and when we consider it, how purile a sin it is! What poor miserable

things we pride ourselves upon! One is vain of a little learning—a small drop of the vast ocean of knowledge; another vaunts himself upon the possession of riches—that he has a little more of earthly dross than another, forgetful that he is truly thereby at a disadvantage in regard to the only thing that is of real importance, for his riches make it more difficult for him to enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, such frivolities as fine clothes, or a nodding acquaintance with some notable man will fill the heart with vainglory, as if these things could endorse the character with nobility or constitute any true claim to the consideration of others, or give any solid ground for self-congratulation! Note, dear brethren, the vainglorious man, and see how he behaves. Is he not given to boasting, to foolish ostentation and pushing himself forward on every occasion, blind to the fact that he succeeds only in making himself ridiculous? And, moreover, does not this sin of vainglory show itself sometimes even in the sacred sphere of religion? Are there not those who are guilty of the sin of hypocrisy because they carry their vainglory into spiritual things; and by an awkward aspect of piety set to persuade others that they are in reality what they merely seem to be. Let such men remember the scathing denunciation of Jesus Christ against hypocrites—the only class of men who, it would appear, roused His anger: “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers” (Matt. xxiii, 13). “Woe to you, because you are as sepulchers that appear not, and men that walk over are not aware” (Luke xi, 44).

What, then, dear brethren, are the remedies against pride and its numerous allied sins? First, the constant remembrance of the fact that this sin is, as we have seen, the root of all others. It is, indeed, an enormous evil. Think, dear brethren; if pride were rooted out of men’s hearts, this world would be a different place. Let us never forget those dread words of Holy Scripture: “God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace” (I Pet. v, 5). The proud man has *God fighting against him*. Another remedy consists in true self-knowledge—gained by humble meditation in the presence of the All-Holy God, in whose sight even “the heavens are not pure” (Job xv, 15). How can he be proud who remembers his past sins, his present defects and failings; who recognizes that any good he has is from God alone; who tries somewhat to realize what is a creature in the sight of God? Alas,

most of us need not go further than the lives of many holy men and women about us to find a standard of comparison that will make us look very little in our own eyes. But the greatest remedy of all against this terrible vice of pride—so far-reaching in its evil effects in the world and in individual souls—is the consideration of the humility of Him who “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God”; yet “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man,” and “humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross” (Phil. ii, 6-8). Because of that humility, our divine Lord has been exalted in His human nature to the very throne of the godhead; “for which cause God also hath exalted him, and given him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (*ib.* ix, 10).

And as He, Our Lord and God, has been thus exalted for His humility, so also He has promised exaltation to the meek and lowly amongst His followers. “Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke xiv, 11).

The next of the great root vices, or capital sins, is that of covetousness or avarice. To see the evil of this vice we need but look around us. It is not one of the characteristic sins of modern times? Cannot the money god claim its millions of worshipers? What dreadful evils spring from avarice as their parent? Is not every so-called civilized country almost entirely ruled by money interests? Why is this land of ours teeming with millions who are no better off than bond slaves, but because their employers *must* have money; must add millions to millions with insatiable rapacity? Where are the sweet virtues of kindness, charity; where are the virtues of uprightness and honesty that ought to be common virtues found in the hearts of all—are these virtues to be found at all in large sections of the society of to-day? They are *not* to be found; they have been put to flight by the god of money—by covetousness and avarice.

What shall I say of the next capital sin—the vice of lust? Brethren, there are committed in our very midst, nameless horrors of impurity that were not surpassed in the godless heathen nations before the light of Christianity dawned upon the world. Thank God there is this difference—and it is an important, and all-important difference—namely, that in Christian days and countries these horrors must be kept in the dark. But they are there; and

they show to what unbounded excesses the wretched slave of lust may be led. Oh, how many beautiful, innocent souls, once washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ, have been irretrievably ruined by the slaves of this hideous vice; how many homes made wretched; how many mothers' hearts broken; how many fair names dishonored; how much permanent misery and lasting unhappiness brought about by indulgence in this passion of a moment? Truly this is dead sea fruit, turning to bitterness ere it has well been tasted. Brethren, there must be a crusade of the children of God against this vice in all its forms; and the crusade must begin with individual personal purity—the manly self-control of the Christian athlete and soldier of Jesus Christ.

Of anger and envy I will not stay to speak now, for you have heard already in this course of instructions a discourse upon those sins. I will come, therefore, to the sin of gluttony, which includes intemperance. That vice of which I have just been speaking finds its chief incitement in excess of eating and drinking. In our own times excess in drink, indulgence in alcoholic liquors, is the chief form of this vice. It affects all classes, both sexes, and various ages. It is an evil the seriousness of which can not be overrated. A picture of the evils resulting from intemperance has been drawn by a master hand, by the late Archbishop Ullathorne of venerated memory. His words could not easily be surpassed by any preacher, and I shall make no apology for quoting them to you now. "Take in your hand," he says to the victim of drink; "take in your hand the cup of delusion, and, with your eyes on the consequences, however appalling—drink! The white bubbles that float on the top of the cup—they are only the tears of your wife. Drink on! You have drained her happiness. Take the gloomy cup anew. The drops look red—they are only the blood of your starving and neglected children. Drink, then—drink on. Take the horrible cup anew. Be not dismayed; you see only the gray hairs of your parents floating on the surface—you have drained their existence. Drink, then, and drink on. But you *must* take the cup; for, alas! it is no longer the cup of choice, but the cup of habit; no longer the cup of enjoyment, but the cup of punishment; no longer the cup of delusion, but the cup of necessity. Its pleasures are gone, whilst nothing remains but its bitterness" (Abp. Ullathorne. *Sermon on Drunkenness*).

To this I need add nothing. As with avarice and lust we have

but to look around us to see the baleful effects of the vice of intemperance; and to all of them we might adapt the eloquent words I have quoted from the illustrious prelate who spoke them. Against these three vices there is but one remedy, though applicable in many ways—it is that Christian sobriety, that Christian self-denial, that Christian power of saying “No” to ourselves, which it is, or ought to be, one of the main objects of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ to acquire and cultivate. This seems trite and common place; but it is a great truth. If our children were as well educated in regard to their *wills* as they are in regard to their intelligence; if more was made of training them to self-denial and self-control in all things, the deadly vices of avarice and lust and intemperance would lose one-half at least of their victims.

There remains only the sin of sloth to speak of. An insidious destroyer of souls, taking away that energy which is a necessary condition for success in the battle with evil and the cultivation of Christian virtue. In this respect the children of this world are often wiser than the children of light. What energy, what diligence, what care the man of the world exhibits in the pursuance of his business or profession! How easy-going, how supine are we too often, alas! in working out our salvation. Brethren, heaven is not to be won without a struggle. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away” (Matt. xi, 12). No one will get himself into heaven by sitting in an armchair. To be slothful is to fall an easy prey to the vices of which we have been speaking. Let us rouse ourselves and shake off our torpor.

“*Now*—not to-morrow nor the next day—but *now* is the hour for us to rise from sleep. The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us, therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh and its concupiscences” (Rom. xiii, 11-14).

XXXVI. THE SIX SINS AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST, AND, THE FOUR SINS CRYING TO HEAVEN FOR VENGEANCE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—All these sins have a special malice, but liable to be overstated. Necessary to view them in the light of (1) universal redemption, (2) sufficiency of grace.

I. Catholic doctrine of universality of redemption stated. The meaning of "sin against the Holy Ghost," and of its "unforgivableness." Not restricted to final impenitence, but includes five others which, of their nature, lead to final impenitence.

II. Foregoing principles applied to respective sins. Despair and presumption opposed to hope. Resisting the known truth opposed to faith. Envy of another's spiritual good opposed to charity. All opposed, therefore, to virtues necessary for salvation. The obvious character of obstinacy in sin and final impenitence. The one an open, bleeding wound; the other death itself. Now is the acceptable time.

III. Sins crying to heaven for vengeance. All aimed against the existence of society. Society, therefore, takes means to exterminate the sins. Hence the vengeance is somewhat immediate.

From the long and sordid catalogue of sins to which men are liable there are some which are singled out by Holy Church as possessing a peculiarly grave disorder, and thus inducing peculiarly grave consequences. Any mortal sin is bad enough. But these are counted as the very worst. They are ten in number, and consist of six sins against the Holy Ghost, and the four sins which cry to heaven for vengeance. The six sins against the Holy Ghost are, presumption, despair, resisting the known truth, envy of another's spiritual good, obstinacy in sin, and, final impenitence. The four sins crying to heaven for vengeance are, wilful murder, the sin of Sodom, oppression of the poor, and defrauding the laborer of his wages. Bad, however, as these sins are, they are not fraught with such dire results as some writers have tried to make out. The meaning of sin against the Holy Ghost has been wofully misunderstood and misrepresented. The doctrine of universal redemption has been sadly distorted. The malice of sin has been emphasized, whilst the mercy of God has been minimized. The letter of Scripture has been forced forward to the crushing out of the spirit. If then the nature of the grave sins in question is to be

rightly understood it must be considered in the light of the Catholic dogmas of divine forgiveness and divine redemption. To neglect these viewpoints is to run the risk of falling headlong into serious intellectual and moral difficulties.

Let the Catholic doctrine of salvation and redemption be stated at the outset. God willed all men to be saved. The Catholic Church has defined that God seriously and sincerely wills the salvation of some who are not of the number of the predestined; and also that Christ did not die for the salvation of the predestined only, but for the salvation of all men. These truths are nothing but what is most luminously declared in Holy Scripture: "For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." "And Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." "Behold the lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world." St. Paul writing to Timothy leaves the matter beyond all question: "I desire therefore first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made by men, for kings and for all that are in high stations, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all, a testimony in due times."

With these texts well before our minds we may now approach that passage from Scripture, which, at first appearance and taken in isolation from its context, seems to indicate a sin which is unforgivable. "Therefore, I say to you: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, but the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." The sin is called by St. Mark "an everlasting sin." An attempt has been made to reconcile this passage with the universality of redemption by narrowing down the sins against the Holy Ghost to the one sin of final impenitence. A moment's reflection, however, should show us that such a declaration were a

mere platitude. Of course final impenitence is an unforgivable sin. But the sin of final impenitence is manifestly not the sin described in the passage in question. The Pharisees had been attributing to Satan the works of salvation done by God. They had given out that "this man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." They had been wilfully shutting their eyes to the works of Christ in order that they might work up some specious pretext for not believing in His divine mission. Their sin was not that of final impenitence, but rather that described in our catechisms as resisting the known truth. The sins against the Holy Ghost, therefore, although they include the sin of final impenitence are not restricted to that. A truer interpretation of them would be to regard them as sins which, of their very nature, merit to be unpardonable; or sins which, of their nature, are peculiarly opposed to grace, and so tend to induce the sin of final impenitence.

Herein lies the special deformity of the sins. Other sins presuppose a certain amount of ignorance and weakness on the part of the sinner. But these sins suppose the sinner to be well enlightened as to the gravity of the offense, and at the same time to be headstrong in his determination to commit the sin or to continue in a state of unrepentance. He who sins out of weakness or ignorance deserves to have less punishment. But he who sins out of full malice has no excuse for having his punishment mitigated.

Here again we may see the difference between sins against the Son of man and sins against the Holy Ghost—how the one class was more easily pardonable than the other. The blasphemies against the Son of man were blasphemies of ignorance, for His divinity had not yet been revealed. The blasphemies against the Holy Ghost, however, were sins of pride and malice, the Pharisees, instead of recognizing the works of the Holy Ghost, attributing them to Satan. When, then, we say that sins against the Holy Ghost are unpardonable we mean that as far as their own nature goes they exclude the conditions of pardon. This, however, does not and can not hinder the mercy and omnipotence of God from performing miracles of grace. The effect of sins against the Holy Ghost—excepting, of course, the sin of final impenitence—is to make repentance extremely difficult and so to induce the risk of final impenitence.

We may now examine the sins in detail and see how the foregoing principles are verified. The first two concern our direct relations with God. Hope is that virtue by which we cling to the

promises of God that He will reward us with future happiness and provide us with all the necessary means of attaining thereto. By the exercise of the virtue of hope we put forth a will-power which fastens on to the omnipotence and faithfulness of God. To refuse to put forth such will-power, therefore, is to act directly contrary to our eternal interests. This refusal may take two forms, namely, that of despair, or that of presumption. Despair is a state of mind in which a man wilfully abandons himself to the thought that God will not save his soul. Two of the most frequent causes are, first, a series of temporal calamities, and, secondly, a long period of a life of sin. A mother, for instance, loses three or four children one after another. She has prayed hard that God might spare them to her. But God sees fit to take them. Then she conceives the idea that God does not care for her, that He does not hear her prayer, and consequently that it is no use trying to pray. A man suddenly realizes that he has been on the downward path. Then when he compares the state in which he is with that in which he ought to be, he fixes his mind on his own efforts, neglects the thought of the power of grace, and concludes that the task is so great that it were hopeless for him to begin again.

God, however, has provided us with saints who have been face to face with these calamities and yet have come through them successfully. The patriarch Job is the classical example for those who have been tried with temporal loss and family bereavement. His attitude in the midst of all was one of unswerving confidence in God. "Though he should kill me, yet will I hope in him."

The penitent saints have far outnumbered the innocent saints. The evident design of God has been to permit them to sink low and to rise again in order to give courage to despairing sinners. The word of God must be justified before the world that the Blood of Jesus is able to blot out *all* sin.

The companion sin of despair is that of presumption. Presumption may be an over-confidence in the mercy of God, combined with a wilful neglect of the means of salvation ordained by God, or it may be an over-confidence in one's own powers independently of the graces of God. Whichever form it takes it is a wilful separation of one's self from the means of grace. It is a deliberate cutting one's self off from the way of salvation, and thus from its very nature it leads to everlasting death. The remedy is a rigorous examination of conscience and meditation of the four last things.

The next sin is one against the virtue of faith. To resist the known truth does not mean to refuse an intellectual assent to a truth proposed. A *known* truth is a proposition which one has already weighed and recognized as true. To resist the known truth is to refuse to take it into account in regulating the moral life. Thus I may argue out the existence of God from the existence of created things. But my assent to the existence of God is not an act of faith until, under the influence of grace, I have recognized God as *my* God and *my* reward. This is the faith without which it is impossible to please God. "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and is the rewarder to them that seek him." This is a necessary means of salvation. To refuse such means of salvation is to sin against the Holy Ghost. To persevere in such refusal is to run the risk of final impenitence, for final perseverance is nothing but death at an opportune moment. Death, however, is a visitor certain in his coming, but most uncertain in his time of coming.

The virtue of charity has its corresponding enemy in the deadly sin known as "envy of another's spiritual good." It is the part of true charity to cover up sins. But envy of another's spiritual good is rather a desire to see another's sins accentuated, or even increased. Since the goods of this life can not be equally possessed by all there arises a natural feeling in the human breast that what is the fortune of others is the misfortune of ourselves; and conversely, that the misfortune of others is the fortune of ourselves. I hear of a legacy left to my friend and I reflect with a certain sense of loss that the legacy has not been left to me. I hear of a railway accident in the neighboring county, and I reflect with a feeling of comfort that I am safely at home. So this feeling is apt to arise with regard to the spiritual good of other people. As a feeling it is no sin. But the act of the will which takes pleasure in or encourages such feeling is a deadly sin. God gives His graces unequally. To be envious of another's spiritual good, therefore, is to complain of God's providence. It is to desire sin, or that which, of its nature, leads to sin, namely, the diminution of goodness. Such a desire, however, is directly and gravely opposed to that virtue by which we love God, as in Himself our greatest good, and our neighbor for the sake of God, the virtue which we call charity.

The deadly nature of obstinacy in sin and of its natural consequence, final impenitence, is obvious. A mortal sin is a grievous

wound inflicted on the soul. But obstinacy in grievous sin is a wound left open by which the soul bleeds to death. We can not see the soul. When we speak of it, we can only do so in terms of body. If we saw a bodily wound open and death imminent, we should hasten as fast as we could to the surgeon to get things put right. Obstinacy in sin, however, is a soul wound far, far more real than any body wound. The soul being an eternal substance, its wounds have eternal consequences. Left uncared for they open wider and become less and less curable as far as the ordinary means of cure are concerned. And the sin of final impenitence is the wound which kills the soul for all eternity. For the latter sin then there is no remedy. The only attitude one can take toward it is to care for its prevention, for cure there is none. The Holy Spirit has set the limit to which obstinacy may be carried. The limit is this very moment. Not another can we call our own. "Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation." Neither the time nor the place, nor the manner of our death is known. In human affairs we pay respect to age and to dignity. But death recognizes no such distinctions. Nor yet does he recognize distinction of place. He may come whilst we are at prayer; but he may also come whilst we are in some place where we have gone for the purpose of sin. He may catch us red-handed. To be thus caught, however, is not to be caught unawares. It is to be caught with our full obstinacy before our minds. And this is why obstinacy in sin is counted as a sin against the Holy Ghost. It is because of its very nature it leads to final impenitence, the sin which, of its very nature, is unforgivable in this world, or in the world to come.

Closely allied to the sins against the Holy Ghost are the sins crying to heaven for vengeance. They would seem to have such a distinct disorder as to demand immediate punishment. The sins against the Holy Ghost, since they lead to final impenitence, lead to that eternal punishment which follows on the dissolution of body and soul. But the sins crying to heaven for vengeance can scarcely be tolerated until the particular judgment. They involve such grave consequences to society that God, in His care for society, visits them with remarkable swiftness.

Of all earthly possessions man's life is the most valuable. All his usefulness in the world depends on the possession of his life. Consequently all nations regard the unjust taking of the life of an

innocent person as the greatest crime against society. All nations reserve their extreme penalty for the punishment of murder. Likewise with regard to the sin of Sodom, all nations, from the most savage to the most enlightened, have regarded it with special horror. It is an unnatural crime against purity. So subversive is it of society that governments take upon themselves the punishment of this species of sin, whilst they leave other species of the same sin of impurity to the conscience of the individual.

Whence comes this unanimous consent of nations condemning these crimes, this universal determination to exterminate the violators of the primary natural law? It comes from God, who dwells in the nations. These crimes are materially against society, but formally they are against God dwelling in society. And so God avenges them through society.

It were unprofitable for us to dwell at too great length, or in too great detail, on these sins, for they are not the besetting danger of our Catholic congregations. It may be well for us, however, to realize their enormity for the sake of other sins which do beset us, and which might be looked upon as less grievous than they really are. Together with murder—the sin of Sodom—there are classed the sins of oppression of the poor and of defrauding the laborer of his wages. The late Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Rerum novarum*, has declared that every man has a right to receive for his labor as much wages as will keep himself and his family in reasonable and frugal comfort. This is the rule, although there may be accidental circumstances modifying it here and there. In any case it is a standard by which Catholics may reckon whether or not they are doing their duty. The laws of our respective countries provide fairly well for breaches of contract and for the care of paupers. But there are countless cases of immoral contracts and of oppression of dependent poor which national laws can not touch. Then do the sins cry out to heaven for vengeance. The worm, when it is trodden on, turns. The oppression of the poor and the wilful under-payment of the laborer are the causes of socialism, anarchy and revolution. It were mockery to preach patience and contentment as long as the causes of dissatisfaction are in operation. The laborer is worthy of his hire, and the poor we have always with us to look after. If, therefore, we neglect these duties we must not be surprised if God, dwelling in the world and controlling all the psychic forces, permits some of them to

seek their due equilibrium. We must not wonder if He allows the scourges of socialism and anarchy to wreak vengeance on the evil-doers. To take away the prop that sustains life is to take away life itself. To carry on a systematic oppression of the poor and a defrauding of the laborer is to strike at the very life of society. And just as society will not tolerate murder or the sin of Sodom, as being aimed against its very existence, so neither will it tolerate the more subtle way of undermining its existence by sapping the lives of its hired laborers and dependent poor. All these things cry to heaven for vengeance.

XXXVII. THE NINE WAYS OF BEING ACCESSORY TO ANOTHER'S SIN

BY THE REV. CHARLES P. BRUEHL, PH.D.

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins."—I Tim. v, 22.

SYNOPSIS.—*Seduction and temptation in the world. Man the great tempter of man.**I. How can the sins of others be imputed to us. We become accessory to another's sin by seduction or scandal. Man has an influence upon his fellowmen either for good or bad. Degrees of scandal.**II. The nine ways of being accessory to another's sin reviewed in detail. Divided into three groups: we may be the authors of another's sin, we may co-operate therein, or we may encourage his wrong doings. Special sins of parents.**III. The wickedness of seduction and scandal. Passage of Holy Scripture, Matt. xviii, 6. He who gives scandal is a murderer of souls, an enemy of Christ and a hellmate of the devil. He will reap bitter remorse. The sins flowing from his scandal will come upon his soul. Severe punishment in hell.**Respect innocence and injure not a soul.*

My friends, the spirit of seduction is abroad. The powers of evil are ever active to entrap and ruin souls. Sin spreads as a pestilential disease by contagion and the subtler influences of infection. Temptation stalks through the highways of our cities, it flaunts its most attractive colors in the pleasure palaces, it lurks on the dancing floor and in the ballroom, it steals into our very homes. It is an all-pervading presence and sweeps torrent-like the land. The germs of iniquity are sown broadcast over the country, as the summer breeze scatters rank seeds over a tropical prairie. "The whole world is seated in wickedness" (John v, 19).

Nor are they, that work at the downfall of poor mortals, malevolent demons, vomited up from the deep; men don the livery of hell, bent on the destruction of their fellowmen. Man lures his brother to sin and insnares the virtue of his sister. Friends entice friends into the road of perdition. The vows of love carry with them the breath of infection. The venom of seduction drops from

honeyed lips and is instilled into the hearts of the guileless by sweet-sounding words, as in some unhealthful clime,

"Where the fever demon strews
Poison with the falling dews."

There are the ravenous wolves in the clothing of sheep, of which Our Lord speaks and against which He so solemnly warns the innocent. For their appearance is deceiving, their demeanor engaging, their smiles bland, their speech polished and fascinating. Their intentions seem harmless; yet they are ravenous wolves with all the fierce, savage and destructive instincts of the wolf. My dear friends, shun these agreeable seducers; avoid these refined corrupters of youth, lest their intoxicating and deadly conversation taint your soul. Be careful in selecting your associates! Winnow them! Sift them! Drop any one showing the slightest stain of moral leprosy. Mistrust the chance acquaintance, however suave his manners may be!

But, ah, may none of you ever become the tempter of his brother. May you never act the sad role of the seducer, nor wear the disgraceful uniform of hell. Draw not others into the snares of sin. May it not be said of you: To be corrupted and to corrupt is the world's course. Beware of contracting the horrid leprosy of vice and of spreading the fearful pollution. "Neither be partaker of other men's sins." For "woe to the man by whom scandal cometh" (Matt. xviii, 7).

I. We read a curious and alarming passage in the book of Psalms: "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord; and from those of others spare thy servant" (Ps. xviii, 13). We tremble at the thought of the sins revealed to us by a serious examination of conscience. Now we learn that there are many more shortcomings, which had faded from our memory, but which will be revived on the day of judgment; nay, that we will be held accountable for the wrongdoings of others. But is this not an unbearable burden? How can the sins of my brother be imputed to me? "For every one shall bear his own burden" (Gal. vi, 5). Aye, my friend, this is true. But there are sins, which, though others have committed them, may be called yours. The hands of another have executed them; but your thought, your inspiration has animated these hands and prompted their actions.

We may thus share the guilt of the foul deeds of others, if in some way or other we have been the cause of their crimes. No man stands isolated in the world. We all exert an influence on our fellowmen, either for good or for bad. The lives of men are interlinked. Every action has a far-reaching power and will shape some other man's course of action. A word spoken at random may prove to the afterlife of some one what the fingertouch of the artist is to the clay he is molding. An undue liberty on your part may undo in some young man who witnesses your behavior, the habits of self-restraint, acquired in long years of religious training, and usher him into a career of abandonment and indulgence. It is appalling to think of the endless chain of sin and misery to which a single act, aye, a single word even, may give rise, wrong begetting wrong, and sin producing sin. There is something uncanny in the fatal exuberance of sin! Many eyes are watching you and your actions! And you must be to others either a shining star, that will lead them to the paths of virtue, or a will-o'-the-wisp, that draws them into the morass of vice.

The Bible calls every sinful word, deed or omission, by which our fellowmen are led to transgress the commandments of God: scandal. The Son of God forcibly inveighs against it and deplors its frequency: "Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come" (Matt. xviii, 7). Scandal has been the trap of many souls. Especially has it ruined the children, the little ones, the innocent, the guileless, the frail and the inexperienced.

There are various degrees of scandal, involving greater or less malice. One may directly and intentionally incite another to sin. Thus the serpent tempted our first parents. The sinner will try to gain followers, enlisting others in the cause he has espoused. It comforts him to have associates in his sin and shame. He is active in behalf of sin and hell. It is his pleasure to whisper serpent-like the shameful mysteries of lewdness into the ear of purity, to contaminate the healthy and to watch the hideous blotches of debauch gradually disfigure their soul and body. There is something diabolic, fierce, wolf-like in this murderous lust of seduction. St. Peter describes the seducer: "But these men, as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare and to destruction, having eyes full of adultery and of sin that ceaseth not; alluring unstable souls, having their heart exercised with covetousness, chil-

dren of malediction" (II Peter ii, 12). We may become a stumbling block to others by our bad actions, and thus indirectly be an occasion of their sinning. Our own carelessness will embolden others to do likewise, and so we are partners of their transgressions and guilt. In many ways we may lead others into sin. We will, therefore, carefully examine how we can become implicated in the misdeeds of our fellowmen.

II. The Catechism tells us that we become accessory to another's sin in nine different ways, viz., by counsel, by command, by consent, by provocation, by praise or flattery, by concealment, by partaking, by silence and by defense of the ill done. We subdivide these into three groups, in the first of which we place: counsel, command, provocation. By these we become the authors of other men's sins; and upon us falls the full responsibility and blame for their action. For we have conceived the black thought, and they have been our instruments in carrying it out. He who hires the dagger of the assassin and commands the dastardly deed, is himself a murderer and bears the stigma of Cain on his brow, where the murderous plan was conceived. He who counsels a bad action is the devil's own solicitor. Of this nature was the perfidious counsel, which the high priest Caiphas gave to the Jews: "Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi, 50). These words sealed the doom of Our Lord. And the hands of Caiphas were as red with the Blood of Christ as those of the executioners. The same holds true of a person who advises a woman to blot out the life that rests beneath her heart. Both are guilty of innocent blood! Both are guilty of crimson murder and worthy of the gallows!

Provocation is the ordinary form which scandal assumes. It may be words, deeds, suggestions or bad example. Immodest conversation arouses the passions of others and brings on many temptations. An unbecoming word is as a spark of fire, carelessly thrown to the winds, causing a conflagration, wherein many may perish. We will have to render a severe account of every idle word; for idle words are poisonous arrows, flying about and inflicting wounds. Indecent dress on the part of women is a powerful provocation to sin. Women dressing immodestly are the bait of Satan, drawing men into the meshes of sin. Let them not plead fashion or the heat of summer. The law of God is above

the rules of style. And it is better to suffer the heat of summer than to be the cause that another must burn in hell fire. Immodesty in dress is the cause of innumerable sins. Be careful, girls, that you may not be damned for the sins of young men, of which you are perhaps ignorant, but which you have instigated by your immodesty in dress. "Let women adorn themselves with modesty and sobriety" (I Tim. ii, 9). Frequently girls provoke undue familiarities by forward and coquettish manners; they encourage liberties which illbred young men take, thus leading these into sin and often falling into shame and disgrace themselves. Young men allowing themselves liberties with girls are severely to be blamed. Their manners savor of the street. They should be spurned from decent society; for their hearts are foul, their thoughts impure, their intentions bent on debauch and seduction. Cursed the hand that violates the sacredness of modesty!

Co-operators in the sin of others we become by constant partaking and concealment. One may yield to the importunity of another for the sake of friendship or love, or for some temporal gain! I do not wish to be more explicit! But I say, let no consideration ever induce you to do wrong, to allow an improper action. Rather sacrifice love, friendship, all the prospects of your future! Give up the young man that makes an improper request! "And if the eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee!" (Matt. xviii, 9). Let those who reap the benefits from other men's crimes, in which they have assisted, remember that they also have the full share of their guilt, and that they will have to undergo the same punishment.

To conceal the criminal and to frustrate the ends of justice means to patronize crime! Of this kind is the receiver of stolen goods. He is no better than the thief; for were it not for him the thief would renounce stealing as profitless. The accomplice of sinners is akin to those dark powers that wait on the evil deeds of men, rendering the lowest and meanest services.

Again we are made partaker in other men's sins by praise, silence; or the defense of the ill done. It shows a perverted turn of mind to congratulate others upon their wrongdoings and to make them feel proud, where they should be confused and ashamed. Yet there are such wicked wretches glorifying the inglorious deeds of men, and thus preventing their conversion. This happens in novels and in the theater where vice is decked in glowing colors. There

also the sins of men are palliated or defended on the plea of human frailty. Silence or secret connivance at the faults of their inferiors is a frequent sin of superiors. The prophet takes them to task: "His watchmen are all blind, dumb dogs not able to bark, sleeping and loving dreams" (Is. lvi, 10).

Saddest of all it is when parents are faithless to their sacred charge and help to ruin their children. How often do parents, inordinately fond of their little ones, shield them against just punishment, thus perverting their moral sense. And what do some parents, ah, but too frequently, allow under their roof! They open the door to the wolf in the clothing of sheep! They allow late company keeping, nightly outings, dubious parties! Parents, remember, the sins of your children, at which you have winked, will weigh heavily upon your soul!

III. The seducer is the darkest figure in the history of men. He is the shadow of the devil and walks in the very footprints of Satan, who was from the beginning the tempter of mankind. The words of Our Lord ring with indignation when he speaks of him: "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii, 6). The sun shall not shine on his grave, for his memory is cursed. With the shapeless monsters of the deep shall he abide, for the monstrosity of his foul deed has polluted the earth. Let us endeavor to understand the consummate wickedness of scandal and seduction.

He who gives scandal is a murderer of souls. For sin is the death of the soul. How disgraceful, to work hand in hand with the devil, who "was a murderer from the beginning" (John viii, 44). And God will require the blood of that soul from you: "If, when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt die; thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way and live; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I require his blood at thy hands" (Ez. v, 18). But the blood of a soul means the Blood of Our Lord; for Christ's Blood gives life to the soul, and he who ruins a soul is guilty of the Blood of Our Redeemer. He robs Our Lord of the fruits of His Passion, he blights the crimson blossoms of His holy Cross. How will he stand before the eternal judge, he, whose hands are dyed with the blood of souls, with the sacred Blood of Christ himself?

The devil will claim him; for he did the work of a devil; for he was the tool of the devil in destroying the work of Christ. He was an apostle of hell, an enemy of Christ, leading astray into the desert the sheep which the Lord was gathering. "Now when you sin thus against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ" (I Cor. viii, 12). The seducer sins against Christ, against the passion of Christ, against the Cross of Christ, against the Blood of Christ; for he ruins that which is dearest to Christ; an immortal soul, cleansed and saved in His own Blood. He depopulates heaven, unlocked by the merits of Christ; and peoples hell, swallowing the souls for which Christ died. If Christ ever will be merciless He will be merciless against him who gives scandal. "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh." Like thunder will His voice sound, when He asks: Where is that soul for which I have suffered hours of agony and which you have sacrificed for a moment of pleasure? And all the heavens will re-echo with malediction, and the angels will relentlessly accuse him, and hell will triumphantly clamor; He is ours! He wore our badge on earth, the badge of the seducer!

The hour of death will bring untold horrors to the mind of the seducer. Remorse will strike its poisonous fangs into his heart. Memory will stir up its bitterest dregs in his soul; for there is no sadder remembrance, nor regret more poignant, than that of a soul misled through our fault. And there is no comfort for him! The thief can restore the ill gotten goods! But who can give back the garment of innocence, torn to shreds and besmirched with sin? Who can renew the dewy freshness and the brightness of the rose crushed by a careless foot? Like a specter the harrowing thought will haunt you, to have destroyed an innocence which parents had anxiously guarded for years, and which delighted the eyes of God and men! To have blasted it in one moment by the hot breath of lust! And the tears wept over the grave of that innocence will come upon your soul as a fiery dew of wrath! This inability to mend the fatal consequences of scandal and the responsibility for all the numerous black deeds following from one bad action, has brought many to despair of their salvation!

Death will blot out our names from the records of the living; it will take the pen, the sword, the tool from our weary hands; our activity has ceased and we rest. Alas! this is not true of the seducer! He is still active in the midst of the living, though his

bones are moldering in the grave. He is dead, but his sin is living, breathing new sins, which fall as a hail of fire upon his head. The good which men do usually dies with them; but the evil deeds which they perform often outlive them. Do you think, my friends, that it is easy for a man to die, when he knows that he leaves his sin, his evil example, his scandals behind him; that they will continue to grow and ripen, that they will yield a terrible harvest which he must reap?

And if there is one torture in hell greater and keener than the other, it will be for the seducer! If there is one dart of God's anger more poisonous and more fiery than the others, it will pierce his wicked heart! If there is one chamber of the infernal prison darker and gloomier than the others, it will be reserved for him! The hell of hell, the deepest pit of the eternal abyss will engulf him! "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh!"

My dear friends, "destroy not the work of God. Destroy not him for whom Christ died" (Rom. xiv, 15, 20). There is nothing more precious, more beautiful on earth, than a soul ransomed by the Blood of Christ, resplendent in the untarnished luster of its primal innocence. Let this soul be sacred to you! Respect its purity! Spare its delicacy! It is God's flower, bedewed with the blood of Christ! It is dear to heaven! Breathe not a word that could dull the splendor of its purity! Do nothing that could blunt the tenderness of its modesty! Lure this innocent child not away from the paradise of its innocence! Wean not its desires from the joys of godliness! Poison not its life blood by unholy suggestions. Disturb not the peace of a chaste mind! Stretch not out thy hand to pluck the flower of God! Destroy not the hope of parents! Blight not the loveliest blossoms of the Church! God will avenge an innocence abused; he will punish the seducer with exquisite pain; he will darken the eve of his life by cruel remorse; he will embitter the hour of his death by the threatening shadows of his foul deeds; he will shower agony on his guilty soul; he will hurl him into the utmost darkness of hell, branded with a stigma worse than that of Cain. "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh." Amen.

XXXVIII. THE CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"They that are according to the flesh mind the things that are of the flesh: but they that are according to the spirit mind the things that are of the spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death, but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. And they who are in the flesh can not please God."—Rom. viii, 5-8.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Classification of men—by man, by God; by God man classified as carnal or spiritual. The description of these two classes.

II. The immense difference between the two. This difference not discernible to the eye of man, but to the eye of God; the insurmountable barrier between the intellectual intercourse of the carnal and spiritual man—the incompatibility of ideas and habits, hence the irreconcilable antipathy between the two.

III. The spiritual life unattainable except by the call and grace of God. It is not a mere stage in the necessary progress of the race nor a mere accidental and superficial divergence of opinion. Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life, the sole source of the supernatural life. His Church incorporates us into Him. It sanctifies the intellect by revelation; the heart by the Commandments and Sacraments; the body by union with the Body of Christ.

I. There are many divisions of men into classes. There are the divisions of nationality and of color, of those who toil and those who enjoy, of the civilized and the savage, of ignorant and cultivated. But these are superficial distinctions and not permanent; any man or race may pass from one class to another. Viewed according to the reality of things, that is, as they are in the sight of God, they are of but small account, for all men are alike before Him. Here is one classification more important than all these, one that is not much noticed here, but which will separate men for all eternity; it is the one of which the text speaks—the division of the natural man and the supernatural man, the human and the divine life, those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the spirit. For the short time we have to live here it matters but little to what class we belong among men; but beyond the grave, there begins our real, our eternal existence, and the important question for us is, whether God has classed us among the

carnal or spiritual, whether we are men of the world or men of God.

These, according to the flesh, are they to whom this world is the beginning and end and all things. The world is the sole object of their lives and faculties; they are entirely wrapped up in it. They have no knowledge of God, of their souls, of a future life, or, if they have some knowledge, they have no care for these things; they have not been renewed by Baptism, or they have fallen from that state by mortal sin and have not renewed themselves by repentance and the Sacraments. They seek for the possessions of this world, riches, power, comfort, honor, their only occupations are in seeking after and holding on to these things. They are led by selfishness and pride and by the sensual inclinations of the body. If they do recognize any duty to their fellowmen, it is only in those matters which concern their bodily health, or worldly knowledge, or the progress of the interests of this life. They make no account of anything beyond this life. They are of the earth, earthy. They see nothing more, they believe in nothing more, they desire nothing more, they merit nothing more and they get nothing more.

The spiritual man is one who, first of all, has a knowledge of truth, belonging to the higher world of God; he knows of the invisible God, his own soul, the future life of joy or pain, the means of attaining to God and a new set of duties beyond those which belong to this world. He has made these things so real and vivid to his mind that he esteems them as more important than any natural truths, and would so mold his life and all his actions and ideas in accordance with them. Chiefly, he keeps himself free from sin and in the grace of God, and hastens to regain that state when he has fallen from it. "The just man liveth by faith." He lives in an atmosphere different from that of the sensual man. In like manner as man lives among the same surroundings as the animals, but is impressed by them differently as he gathers different higher ideas than theirs, sees beneath the shape and color of things into their causes, effects and uses, and is conscious of much more than are the brutes; so the spiritual man differs from the man of the world in having a different scale of value for things, reading a different interpretation in events, looking forward to a different future, being moved by different motives. The spiritual man is in daily communication with invisible beings by means of prayer, he is conscious of the presence of God and blessed spirits, he knows of secrets and

understands problems which are a sealed book to other men, he recognizes a rigid law which bids him restrain his natural impulses, sacrifice the immediate interests, serve other men by obedience and by benevolence. His views about the good things of life and its evils, about prosperity and pleasure, about poverty, sufferings, death, are completely opposite to the views current in the world. Men of this kind live in God's presence, they live for God and their earthly course prepares them for a future life of glory and delight in union with God.

This is rather a description of two extreme types than an accurate classification of all mankind. There are indeed an immense number who correspond exactly to the description given of the spiritual man, and a still more immense number who live precisely as I have described the carnal man. But the majority are, during this life, on the border line. The variety of human characters defies all rigid classification. Each one is molded by a different combination of favorable and unfavorable circumstances, each one is influenced by the joint good and evil inheritances from a thousand ancestors, so each character contains inconsistent elements. As the different temperaments of men, the phlegmatic, the nervous, the bilious, are never found unmixed in anyone; so there are many men tainted by worldiness, who on the whole are spiritual, and many carnal minded men who have some scraps of faith and never leave the spiritual life wholly out of consideration; there are many also who cross from side to side and back again, leading lives of sin, but now and then repenting, growing fervent for a space, and then relapsing. Bearing this in mind, we may still say that, roughly, all men are divided into these two classes; and when death comes, it will find each one definitely in one class or the other, and will fix him in it forever.

II. Between these two classes of men there is an immense difference. They are separated more widely than if two thousand years of time or the whole breadth of Europe and Asia divided them. It is strange that this should be. You pass them in the streets, you transact business with them and you see nothing that shows any difference. They are in daily association with one another; great part of their daily lives is the same; they inhabit the same country, eat the same food, wear the same clothing, follow the same pursuits, conduct their affairs in much the same manner; further still, they may be of like opinions on most subjects, may be joined in the same in-

terests, may be on terms of cordial friendship, bound together by reciprocal benefits, or by the closest of all ties—the marriage bond. There is no visible difference between them except the slight one, as many would call it, of their holding opposite opinions on some recondite and impractical point concerning the invisible world or the nature of revelation.

1. Yet in the eye of God, and in reality, two such persons are separated as widely as earth and heaven. They are on two utterly different levels of existence; one lives in that sphere to which God and the angels and saints belong, he breathes their air in a manner, the same breath of life is in him as in them, viz.: the communication of the spirit and God; the other is entirely excluded from all this. They do the same action, but it has a different value and a different reward in each case. With one it is a natural act of virtue proceeding from the wisdom of the flesh, which is death; with the other it is a supernatural act proceeding from the wisdom of the spirit, which is life and peace. The one act is done under the influence of the divine life, and is imbued with it, and rewarded accordingly. The other action is dead, not as being a sin, but as being uninformed by the higher life; it is not “pleasing to God” in the sense meant by the Apostle, although it will not go without its full reward on its own natural level.

2. Besides this invisible line of demarcation between the carnal and the spiritual man, there is also an insurmountable barrier in their intellectual intercourse; inasmuch as “the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, because it is spiritually discerned” (I Cor. ii, 14). The ordinary imperfect Christian, though on the whole a spiritual man, can enter into the ideas of the worldly man, but even in him there are large departments of feelings, beliefs and aspirations that the worldly mind can never enter into, because they are simple foolishness in its eyes. A person of really saintly life would find it impossible to hold any extended communication with a thoroughly carnal, worldly mind, unless on condition of avoiding all subjects of the highest interest to either. The same things convey such different impressions to each mind, that words hardly have the same meaning to each. They have no common ground on which to stand. They cannot understand each other. The pleasure of one would be misery to the other. The wisdom that one admired would seem to the other incomprehensible

folly. Poverty is a virtue with one, it is a crime with the other. One thinks humility to be true greatness, the other thinks it contemptible. By the word "immorality" one means lust and impurity, the other chastity. At rare moments it may happen that the unspiritual man, if honest and kindly, will go so far as to admire the supernatural excellence of some friend of God, but never so far as to understand it. Therefore, the Apostle says, "Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concern hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?" (II Cor. vi, 14, 15).

3. Too often it happens that this incompatibility of ideas and habits engenders violent and irreconcilable antipathy. We have seen such relations in nature, as between the beast of prey and his victim, and in another way between certain chemicals, or between oil and water. It is the same between men of certain different races, or of opposite characters. So, too, must it ever be between the carnal and spiritual elements in this life, between the world and the church, between faith and irreligion. This is no passing or temporary opposition belonging to certain times and places. We can not look forward to its extinction and to perfect harmony between the two ideas. There may seem to be peace, but it is merely on the surface; it is only that the external manifestations of hostility are suppressed, or that the barbarous forms of it have been changed into others. The spirit of Christianity (not always, however, observed by the Christians), teaches us to love and serve all men, to be patient with their errors and their waywardness, to give them credit for meaning well, and to do them no evil, even in return for evil; but at the same time we are forbidden to pass over or make light of error, or to yield one iota of true principle for the sake of compromise. On the part of the unspiritual class of men there is no such high principle of divine charity to make them check the natural ebullitions of antipathy against the spiritual; but there are two things that combine in them to produce much the same effect. One is indifference as to abstract truth and falsehood, and a resolve to judge of men simply by their outward good deeds; the other is the desire to keep points of difference in the background, so as to draw all citizens to work harmoniously for those natural objects on which all are agreed. But, hostility to spiritual truth and suspicion of those who hold it remain not less real because dormant and

ready to break out as soon as may seem opportune. St. Paul spoke a truth for all times when he said, "Now, we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then, he that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was after the spirit, so also, is it now" (Gal. iv, 28, 29). If it were not in the very order of things that the flesh should persecute the spirit, the last hundred years would certainly have seen the end of all hatred, injustice and cruelty against those who ask only to be let worship God peaceably in the Catholic Church. We have heard to surfeit about this age of religious liberty, freedom of thought, association, security for person and property against arbitrary force; we have heard much about enlightenment, toleration, equality before the law, tenderness to criminals and so on. There has certainly been a great improvement in professed principles, and they have generally been carried into effect, though sometimes only as a matter of convenience. But there is always some civilized country where those beautiful principles are cynically disregarded wherever Catholics and religion are in question; and during the last century all the phenomena of the old Roman persecutions, including torture, have reappeared at various points. May it ever be so, for St. James has told us that "whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God" (James iv. 4).

III. The spiritual life stands so far apart from the life of the flesh that it is absolutely unattainable by men, except by the special call and assistance of God. We may most truly say as Abraham does in the parable of Lazarus and Dives, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you can not, nor from thence come thither" (Luke xvi, 26). We do not, of course, say it as meaning that the carnal man can never be changed and become spiritual, and that the spiritual man is in no danger of falling back from his high position into the ranks of the fleshly and worldly; but we mean that no development and no use of the natural faculties will raise a man by his own efforts into the spiritual life; and that no progress in earthly condition will ever effect a compromise between the spirit of Christianity, and the spirit of the world.

It is becoming the fashion to treat of Christianity and its manifestations during the ages of faith, either in the great saints or in popular life, as being no more than one stage in human progress, as a mere phase through which mankind passed, midway between the

paganism of old times and the enlightenment of the present century. And unbelievers profess to trace in the history of barbarism and paganism the growth of the Christian idea and the Christian life. It is, they pretend, a product of certain times, like the feudal system or monarchical idea. In its own day it was suitable enough to the uncultured state of mankind, it produced its good effects; but it is no longer adapted to the needs of such superior persons as the present generation; hence its force has died away, and its stream, like the tributary of a great river, is merging into the general current of modern worldly, carnal life. This idea proceeds from a grievous blindness to facts, and must lead to grave errors in providing for the needs and remedying the evils of the world.

There is another false idea which springs from the same forgetfulness of the vast difference between the natural and supernatural orders. To spare themselves the labor of investigating religious truth and the disadvantages of embracing it, men find it convenient to persuade themselves that religious differences are just superficial differences of opinion, and do not penetrate any deeper than do differences of men's weight or of their trades. After death, they say, all will be alike in God. Looking over the western sea each man sees a different faith of light, but all converge in the setting sun. There is some heaven and rest for all.

One answer meets both these errors. Between the carnal and the spiritual life there is a great gulf fixed. Any man may pass from one to the other on condition of making a thorough and fundamental change in his ideas and his life; but the two different lines never meet, or combine, or lead one into the other. The spiritual state is a life; it has a principle of motion and force in it corresponding to that intangible principle which makes so great a difference between the animal that has it and the same when without it. It is a law in all nature that life is only produced by life. Between the different stages of being there are sharply defined limits and the lower form of life can never intrude into the sphere of the higher. No arrangement of unorganic substances will change them into organic. The plant never gives birth to an animal. Animals can never rise to the height of human intelligence and freedom. Far greater, far more impassable than the interval between different classes of great beings is the interval between creation and the Creator. Between the life of man, the crown of creation, and the life of God, the distance is infinite; and it is the life of God which

is present in those who have been raised to the supernatural state: it is not the advance of civilization nor any other earthly force that begets in man that life which is beyond all created nature. Death, too, is but a natural progress; it changes the mode of existence, but it can import no new, more than natural, life into the soul which is without that life.

Jesus Christ, the son of God, made man, is the way, the truth and the life, in whom are united both the divine and the human life. He is the sole source of the supernatural life of God, which is infused into men. Apart from Him and the methods which He has appointed for the communication of that life, we remain plunged irretrievably in death, *i. e.*, in the natural, carnal, worldly life. What we need is to be incorporated into Christ, to be brought into union with Him, mind with mind, heart with heart, and even body with body. To do this is the function of that organization which He instituted and the Apostles propagated, which fills the whole earth and has ever been the central point of all religious life—it is the function of the Catholic Church.

The Church gives us:

1. The footsteps of revealed truth in faith, which is the conformity of the intellect to that of Christ and the commencement of life in Him. When we see Jesus we see the Father also, and eternal life consists incipiently in this, "That they may know thee, the only true God and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ" (John xvii, 3). Faith leads to the closer union of our hearts with God through the Heart of Jesus. "The Father himself loveth you because you have loved men and have believed that I came out from God" (John xvi, 27). The Church gives us also:

2. That law to observe which is the effective exercise of our love. "If you love me keep my commandments" (John xiv, 15). In Holy Communion we have the supreme exercise of our faith and love.

3. Our bodies, too, are sanctified by union with the Body of Christ and we have in it the completion of our supernatural life in God. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me" (John vi, 58). Then can the spiritual man say with the fullest meaning, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20).

The natural life of the world can furnish none of these three elements of the supernatural life. They are to be found only in

membership with the Catholic Church, or in that good-will which is equal to the deed and which supplies the want when actual membership is impossible. How great is the privilege of being called to the Catholic faith! How far superior to the groveling, unworthy life of sense and worldliness which so many lead, is that life to which we are called! We enjoy a dignity unattainable and even incomprehensible to others. We belong to a higher sphere of being. We have possibilities of holiness open to us beyond anything that others have. Let us see that we walk worthily of the high vocation to which we are called, that our actions correspond to our privileges, that we make full use of our opportunities, and that the holiness and the power of God's life may be manifest in our mortal bodies.

XXXIX. THE WORLD, A PRODIGAL SON

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."—Luke xv, 16.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The parable of the prodigal son true to life. The description of the prodigal; his character, circumstances, motives, actions. This parable can be applied to nations and to the world as well as to individuals.*

II. *As applied to the world—(a) What God our Father has done for the Christian world through His Church. (b) The inheritance prepared for it. (c) The change of spirit; how it left its true home; the result; Protestantism; Rationalism; Atheism. (d) The dissipation of its inheritance. (e) Its destitution and consequent increase of crime; sinking to a level lower than that of the beasts. The hope of a return; some signs of it; how God will receive the prodigal.*

I. The parable of the Prodigal Son is perhaps the most beautiful and the most hopeful of the many spoken by Our Divine Lord. It is very vivid, very true to life, and the occasions for applying it are very frequent. We have presented to us the tranquil life of labor in the home among the hills of India. There is the venerable, affectionate father, the hard-working, faithful elder son and the younger man, who thinks himself made for something better, and is discontented with the lowly monotonous labor that fills their lives. He is full of vigor and ambition, confident in his abilities, thirsting for novelty and excitement, longing for independence and pleasure. He despises his lot and cannot resign himself to it; he broods over it till he finds it intolerable; he works languidly, with increasing disgust, at last he resolves to break away from it and he rudely asks for his share of the property, which does not as yet belong to him, anticipating his father's death. The father sees that no good is to be got of him as he is and that he must be allowed to take his fate into his own hands. His experience of life enables him to foresee what will happen to the headstrong youth; he warns him probably, but without effect; and when nothing else remains to be done, he yields to his wishes, divides the property, and allows him to depart.

The prodigal gathers all he can lay his hands upon and goes off to a distant country, wishing to break entirely with the past, to for-

get his father's tenderness, to see him no more. His first sentiment is joy in his independence. He is free from the restraints and the labors of his home, the whole world is open before him, he is his own master, he can go where he wishes, obey every impulse, enjoy himself to his heart's content. He makes for some great city, no doubt, whose splendors and pleasures had come to his ears and dazzled his imagination; he meets companions like himself, who are anxious to get all they can out of life; his wealth gains him friends who flatter him and join in scoffing at the simplicity of the home he has left; pleasure leads to debauchery; he forgets the future and thinks the present moment will last forever. Suddenly he finds that his wealth is gone, pleasures are at an end, his friends turn their backs upon him, he is left to destitution and bitter memories of the past.

Still the prodigal has his youth and his energies; he has plenty of time before him; there are many openings in the world; he should surely be able to make his way and build up his fortunes. But there came a great famine. This he had not expected. Employment ceased, there was no money for the payment of labor, no food to be bought; there was no one to take pity on the spendthrift and the profligate. He had to humble his pride and become a servant; he had to render service, not to a man, but in feeding and caring for the uncleanest of brutes—swine, the abomination of the Jews. Such was his misery that he would have been glad to have shared the nauseous, unsatisfying food that the swine did eat, and yet there was no man to give him even these husks.

It needed all this suffering and degradation to bring the prodigal back to a right mind. Unless he had touched that extremity he would never have begun to think again of his father's house. Now for the first time he reflects; he understands the real value of things and their relations to one another. He has learned that "it is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. iii, 27). The yoke of the Lord is necessary for perfect liberty and if a man cast it off he will only fall into a worse servitude. He has learned that the peaceful and moderate enjoyment which arises from labor and subjection is better than the fierce excitement of dissipation which only leads to sorrow and disgrace. He has learned that the enticements of passion are delusions, that pleasure is short lived, that wealth cannot command happiness. He has found out his own folly and incapability and ingratitude. He remembers the

goodness of his father and the happiness of his home. He returns asking to be received, not again as a son, but as a hired laborer—a lowly state indeed, but one that seems honorable and happy enough to satisfy him, and much more than he has deserved. The father has long been watching for his son's return, he goes forth to meet him, he clothes him in the best robe, puts a golden ring upon his finger and kills the fatted calf. The prodigal is reinstated as a son in all that he forfeited; his offenses are forgiven, and he only remembers his former miseries as heightening his present happiness.

This parable is a figure not only of every individual soul that abandons God for sin, but of humanity at large. We may trace here step by step the history of the world from infancy to youth and manhood, the motives which have led it from God, its apostacy, the abasement into which it has fallen, and we gather hope that it may be led to follow the prodigal in his repentance as well as in his sin.

II. 1. The modern world passed its early life in its Father's house. When the ancient world was shattered by its own corruption and the violence of the barbarians, only one force remained sound and strong, the Christian Church. Anarchy and ruin prevailed till the Church gathered a new society together in the name of Jesus, organized it under the law of the Gospel, and imbued it with a new spirit of freedom, brotherhood and devotion. From Rome, the center of the new world as of the old, there went forth missionaries, bishops and legates carrying with them the one "form of sound words," the worship and the one law. Thus, one identical spirit presided over the consolidation of each separate state of Europe, establishing everywhere a uniform civilization and founding the international commonwealth of Christendom. During centuries the great work of progress was steadily carried on under the auspices of religion, material improvement and moral improvement and spiritual improvement advanced step by step, destroying with many struggles the last remnants of dying paganism and curbing the barbarism of the new nations. The Church's work was first to convert the heathen tribes, then to give them settled government, then to abolish slavery and secure popular liberties, then to check irregular violence, to refine manners, to found schools of learning, to show the dignity of labor and encourage industry, to cultivate the arts and sciences. Persecutions and wars, heresies and schisms, intrigues and scandals, were ever obstructing the work and progress,

but it went on steadily, overcoming them all and gaining new triumphs in every century. So was the world nurtured, educated, equipped with all its most valued powers by the hand of the Catholic Church.

2. The period of the Renaissance came. The Church had successfully accomplished its task of molding civil society and preparing it for its career. The world began to feel the pulsing of a new life within it, it became conscious of its powers and was soon filled with elation at its successes. Its great enemy, Mahomedanism, was checked, a new world was discovered, the old world treasures of literature and art came forth, printing placed them within the reach of all, the time of emancipation and boundless enjoyment seemed to have arrived. Men began to chafe against the austere restraints of religion, and to resent the authority which had hitherto guided them. They thought these belonged to the time of childhood and not to the young manhood of the world; they felt fit for independence; they wanted to carve out their own destinies for themselves. They would take with them what they considered as their own, all the endowment and inheritances of the old Catholic times; they consider these as the creation of their own genius; they show no gratitude to that parent who had during centuries prepared that inheritance for them. They wish for no advice, no guidance, no further assistance; their possessions and their well-trained faculties are sufficient for them; they will take these and leave their Father's house and go forth into a distant land where they will never again be troubled by the sight of that home where they labored and were subject as children.

This was the commencement, and from that time a great part of the world has wandered farther and farther away from its old home. The emancipation of the heart and imagination and abandonment to vanity and pleasure, preceded the emancipation of the intellect from the obedience of faith. The great revolt of the Reformation followed; every doctrine was called in question, every man became his own Pope, all authority was thrown off, all unity shattered. Rationalism was the natural consequence of Protestantism, and followed close upon its heels. The criticism which had been turned against the Church was even turned against the Bible; it could not be expected that the written word of God would be respected, when His living word had been set aside. There is a logical progress in disbelief as in all other things and the rejection of one

truth must weaken the hold on others and lead rejection, first of some, and finally of all truths. Such has been the actual course of events. The world outside the Catholic Church has gradually drifted farther away from Christianity into atheism; it has ceased to be Christian, even in name; it has lost all belief in revelation, in the supernatural order, in all moral law except such as is enforced in the police courts, in the immortal soul of man, in the existence of God. But, besides this, even the Christian world is largely affected by unchristian doctrines. In the public life of nations, which are still called Christian, the influence of the law of Christ has completely ceased. Years ago it was shown that what was once Christendom is now but a "civilized heathenism," and since then things have been growing still worse. There is hardly a country but has contributed to the destruction of religion by its public acts; by divorce laws, or irreligious sanction, or confiscation of Church property, or suppression of religious orders, or the encouragement of unbelief and immorality. In the life of finance and commerce, fraud and robbery are the rule rather than the exception. In private life there is the most wide-spread and horrible unchastity, selfishness, intemperance. After the destruction of faith, the morality was the last stronghold of the Christian spirit, and now the world has pretty well destroyed that within its own domain. Thus it is, that the world has left its Father's house.

3. In the gradual receding of the world from the Catholic Church we see also the gradual dissipation of the paternal inheritance. Amongst the possessions which the prodigal world derived from the Catholic Church were the sense of religion, a certain number of doctrines, some sacraments, the Bible, the practise of prayer, the moral law, and in addition all the temporal advantages of civilization, such as social order, education, etc. The world retained these, used them and profited by them for a time. The knowledge and the habits taught by the Church during many generations became almost part of men's natural character, and they did not cease as soon as the connection with the source was cut off. But they are being exhausted as the world passes in its course through heresy, and schism, and rationalism, into infidelity and atheism. Christian doctrines are dropped one by one, the higher supernatural go, and then the natural ones, and finally the sense of religion and the sense of morality are weakened and become extinct. The social ideas of Christianity survive for some time longer with the material results

which they have created; but they too gradually lose their influence. After religious unity ceases, the international union of states begins to die, then social unity in each community breaks up and gives way to hostility between classes. Cohesion is destroyed, the strength of unity is lost in weakness, the house is divided against itself, and it is impossible for it to stand. When the world began to throw off the yoke of religion, it thought itself rich enough in its endowment to go on forever in the way of progress; it forgot about the future, and about the danger of exhausting its possessions in the enjoyment of its independence. Its inheritance, which it brought from its Father's house, is now pretty well expended; the prospects of the future appear much less favorable than formerly they did; unexpected troubles have arisen; the social machine does not work easily; there is no sign of remedies for the evils but many reasons to expect some great catastrophe.

4. The destitution of the prodigal and his fall to the level of the beasts fully represent what is actually happening to the world, now that it has squandered these blessings which religion brought to it. It has become abundantly evident to all who take more than a one-sided view, that the world is moving on a downward incline. Leaving out of consideration the counterpoise that there is in the growth of the Catholic Church in numbers, unity, fervor and strength, and making fullest allowances for such advance as actually is taking place, we can not but see that there are tendencies at work at human society, such as will, if they continue, lead to its disruption. There are more serious grounds for apprehension than for self-congratulation and hope. Many, it is true, have unbounded expectations of the world's future, but they are relying, not on the development of present tendencies, but on the hope of some great social change, on the acceptance of new principles which will alter the whole current of life. The advances on which we congratulate ourselves so much, are of a very limited kind, and they are far from meeting all our wants; and, at the same time, they bring disadvantages with them which grow into great evils and at last become so enormous that all the efforts of civilization, and of religion too in its present restrained state, are unable to keep them in check.

For instance, the increase of population has come to mean only the increase of miserable beings; it is looked upon with utter terror; men dread the filling up of the whole earth with beings who cannot

be provided with the necessities of existence. Again, the wealth and luxury of the world have increased enormously; but the higher the mountains the deeper must be the valleys; an intenser and wider misery accompanies the growing sum total of wealth. As wealth increases it tends, still more, to concentration in a few hands instead of the division, which is the thing that we require. The whole of each country is practically owned by a few of its inhabitants, and as things go on, will probably be owned by fewer still. A combination of a few irresponsible men is able to throw thousands of families out of employment and disorganize a branch of commerce throughout the whole world. Wealth and power in the hands of unscrupulous men thus become a source of greater destitution and of subjection which is more grinding than slavery. Think of the horrible revelations that burst upon us from time to time, telling of the want, the suffering, the brutality, the despair into which millions have fallen. This state of things prevails precisely in those places where religion has been cast off and where civilization has made the greatest strides.

Accompanying this material misery there is the worse misery of crime. In every country there is a large and increasing population which live by crime. Morally, they have fallen, not to the level of the beasts, but far below it. See how the tastes of mankind are becoming debased and vicious. Look at the amusements that are most popular, at the literature which is most profitable, at the growing uncleanness of art, at the wholesale way in which the passions are excited, and the means of gratification held out to them. Think again of the epidemic of dishonesty in the world, and how utterly untrustworthy so many men are. And yet dishonesty prevails everywhere, and for the most part is neither detected nor punished. Again, reflect how the vices of intemperance and gambling are advancing till they have become national calamities. It is evident that crime is not the offspring of ignorance, as used to be thought. It has only changed its character under the prevalence of education, and has become more wary, more clever, and more dangerous. There are some more horrible and unnatural crimes which are becoming more prevalent day by day, viz.: suicide and infanticide, with the most diabolical cruelty toward children. Infanticide has become in some places an ordinary means of livelihood. Suicide, which is evidence of the last stage of mental distress, speaks of the rapid growth of intense suffering and of absolute hopelessness.

What resource has the prodigal world in all this misery? Only the husks of swine. Something not fit for the nutriment of man, that will not satisfy the cravings of his hunger, that can only prolong his living death, but not infuse new life into his veins—atheistic philosophy, anti-Catholic prejudices, worn-out lies, or, at the best, a few scraps of dislocated truths, combined into an heretical system and falsely called Christianity.

5. Judging by the lesson of the parable we may conclude that things will go to the worst extreme before they can improve. The world will go on obstinately on its own way till it can no longer ignore the misery of its state, the hopelessness of its own endeavors and the worthlessness of these husks on which it is even now feeding. While we can hardly look for an earthly improvement, it is open to us to hope that the miseries of the world will bring it at last to the thought of its Father's house and move it to return. We can not say if it is possible for the world to be renewed to penance; there is such a thing as obstinacy in sin which is only made blinder and harder by the endurance of the penalties of sin. "They blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and wounds, and did not penance for their words" (Apoc. xvi, 11). Possibly their generation may be given into the hands of the destroyer, like the Jews of old and the corrupted civilizations of Greece and Rome. But we may be almost certain that there will be a great return of the world sooner or later, whatever the world of that day may consist of, to its Father's house and the unity of the one faith in the fold of Christ. Already, there are signs of a turning to God in His Church for refuge from present and coming evils. Many are looking into history and correcting their prejudices about the Church, others are impressed by her present services to mankind and exhibiting a great veneration for her, many are imitating her in details, many others are accepting her in full as the Church of the living God. In due course, that movement will become general; the world will recall the happiness and the true progress which it made in former times; it will contrast the peace of God's service with the miseries of its own independence, it will see that the lowest in God's kingdom have more of true dignity and happiness and prosperity than the unbelieving world with all its pride and its possessions, its progress and its culture. Nabuchodonosor was smitten by God for his pride, and was cast out from among men, and lived for seven years with the beasts

till he knew "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. iv, 29). We may hope that the present world will, like that prince, lift up its eyes to heaven, and be restored to sense and its proper condition. If it should ever do so, then we shall begin to see the real capabilities and the greatness of humanity. God will bring good out of the previous evil. He will regenerate the earth once more, the evil will raise up a well-balanced and harmonious society on the ruins of the old, by means of that Church which is the sole instrument of His dealings with man. The prodigal will be received into full favor, and we shall see the accomplishment of the promises that are now suspended for our sins. The word of the Lord which was spoken to Jerusalem by the prophet will have its fulfilment in the world at large, "She shall follow after her lovers, and shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, and shall not find, and she shall say, I will go and return to my first husband, because it was better with me then than now. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, and I will have mercy on her that was without mercy. And I will say to that which was not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Osee ii, 7, 21, 23, 24).

XL. A FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

BY THE VERY REV. ALEX. MACDONALD, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—I. (a) "Faith without works is dead." Faith the foundation of Christian character, the root of justification. No plant lives by its roots alone; no Christian lives by faith alone. To live, not simply to be, but to be active. (b) Divine warranty for doctrine of good works. Salvation by faith and works. Works without charity dead. "If you love me, keep my commandments." (c) Parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Three things taught; (1) necessity of labor; (2) labor merits recompense; (3) recompense of labor in Christ's vineyard eternal life. Folly of laying up treasures on earth.

II. (a) Character-building "our destined end or way." Each man artificer of his own character. Character, built by deeds, rests four-square on cardinal virtues. (b) Prudence, "the charioteer," guides man in life's journey. Helps him to keep the golden mean. Christian prudence guides by higher light than that of reason. (c) Justice the framework of character. Straight-dealing with God and men. Worst form of dishonesty that which denies to God His due. "What doth it profit a man," etc.? (d) Fortitude, moral strength. Not always same as courage. Highest type of, found in enduring. Human vertebrates and invertebrates. Need of backbone in things of faith. (e) Temperance holds animal passions in check. Sobriety but a form or phase of temperance. Evil of intemperance. Sobriety essential. Chastity even more than sobriety.

III. (a) Law and form of Christian perfection—"Be ye perfect." All of us "called to be saints." Sermon on Mount a trumpet call to Christian perfection—but not a command. Doing common things uncommonly well—this is perfection. (b) Foundation of Christian perfection humility. Most necessary virtue. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (c) Crown and completion of perfection charity. Love a builder. The "two loves." "Build the more stately mansions, O my soul."

"If anyone shall say that a man who is justified and ever so perfect is not bound to keep the commandments of God and of the Church, but only to believe as if the Gospel were a nude and unconditional promise of eternal life, without regard to the observance of the commandments, let him be anathema" (Council of Trent, sess. vi. chap. xvi, can. 20). Faith is the root of our justification. Without it we can not please God. It is the foundation on which Christian character is built, the character that makes a man good in the eyes of God; for "my just man," says the Apostle, "liveth by faith." Even as the plant cleaves by its roots to the soil whence it draws its nourishment, so must the Christian cleave by faith to Christ, that from His fulness he may draw the grace and truth which are the nourishment of the soul. What sap is to the plant, that the grace of Christ and the truth of Christ are to the soul of the

Christian. As well might it be said that the plant lives by its roots alone, as that the Christian lives by faith alone. To live is not simply to be, but to act. It is by dint of acting, by dint of working, that the plant lives, that the sap is kept in circulation within it. Even so it is by dint of acting and by dint of working that the Christian lives and builds himself up after the pattern of Christ; for "faith without works is dead." "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more by good works to make your calling and election sure, for doing these you shall not sin at any time; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. i, 10-11).*

"If you would enter into life," says our blessed Lord, "keep the commandments." And again, "He who doth not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Here is divine warranty for the doctrine of good works. A man can no more be saved without works, *i. e.*, at least the works involved in the observance of the commandments of God and His Church, than he can be saved without faith. Of course, God takes the will for the deed in the case of one who is sincerely converted in his last moments, when he is now no longer able to do good works in the more obvious sense. But the very act of his co-operation with God's grace in the moment of conversion is a good work in the Catholic understanding and sense of the expression. It need hardly be added that no work is good in God's eyes or merits or eternal recompense unless it is performed in His grace and friendship. As faith without works is dead, so are works dead without charity, *i. e.*, if performed in the state of mortal sin. Indeed, "faith without works is dead," is only another way of saying, "faith without charity is dead"; for charity, or the love of God, above all things, for His own sake, is "the fulfilment of the law," and the proof of charity, as St. Gregory the Great observes, is the performance of good works. Hence, Our Lord himself says, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Our Lord, for the most part, taught His truth in parables. He likens "the kingdom of heaven," which is His Church, to a householder who hires laborers for his vineyard, and pays them their

*Ward in his *Errata* (ed. of 1847, p. 27) points out that Luther was the first to omit the words "by good works" in this passage, and adds: "And so do both the Calvinists abroad, and our English Protestants at home, read and translate even to this day, because they hold the self-same errors." The words are omitted even in the *Revised Version*, though they occur in all the early Greek codices (Cf. *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*; Herder).

hire when evening is come. Those who stand outside idle "all day," *i. e.*, till toward the "eleventh hour" or hour before sunset, for that no man has hired them, get the same reward as those who have worked the live-long day and, as they complain, "have borne the burden of the day and the heat." From this parable we gather that every true member of the Church of Christ must needs be a laborer in the vineyard. By faith he enters, if it so be that he was born without; by faith he hears the call; but it is a call to labor, a call to do the Lord's work while yet it is day, for "the night cometh when no man can labor." An idle faith will avail no one. We see, in the second place, that the laborer in the vineyard is accounted worthy of his hire; that he really earns on merits, in some true sense, the reward that he receives. The lord of the vineyard enters into an agreement with each laborer, and promises to give each "what shall be just." So, between God and each Christian there is a covenant, the Christian engaging himself to love and serve God, and God, on His part, promising as a reward eternal life. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii, 10), and this St. Paul speaks of as "a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will give me in that day" (II Tim. iv, 8). We see, in the third place, that all the laborers in Christ's vineyard get the same reward. "I am," says God Himself, "thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv, 1). Eternal life is the reward that we are promised, *i. e.*, the vision of God in glory, which in itself is the same, but not the same in those who enjoy it, for in the measure of the merit is the recompense, and "star differs from star in brightness." How earnestly should we labor to win the crown of life and the joy that knows no end! This only is true wisdom, though the world always counts it folly, to leave all things and follow Christ. "And I will say to my soul," said the rich man in the parable, "soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be that thou hast provided? So is he (a fool)," adds our divine Master, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke xii, 19-21). If you would be truly rich, says St. Gregory the Great, seek true riches, By all means, then, let us strain every nerve to become rich, multi-millionaires even, but in treasures that we can take with us when we go hence.

I have said that to live is not simply to be, but to act. "The nature of man is such," someone has said, "and so much depends upon action, that everything seems to call out to us with a loud voice: Do something, do it, do it."

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way,
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day.

God has given each one of us a work to do; a work to do in this world, but for the next. It is said that every man is the artificer of his own fortune, and this is true. But he is the artificer of something that means vastly more to him, and is in a far truer sense his own, than fortune, and that is his character. "When a man dies," is a true saying of the Koran, "those who survive him ask how much property he has left behind, but the angel who bends over the dying man asks what good deeds he has sent before him." It is good deeds that make a good character. It is by dint of doing good that good character is formed, even as the hard iron or steel is shaped at will by repeated blows of the hammer in the smith's hands. Now Christian character is a type, the highest and best, but still a type, of human character, for in becoming a Christian one does not cease to be a man. Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it. And in the order of nature good character is built up upon the four cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Resting on these, character is four-square. Such must the character of the Christian be. It has to be built up by the practise of the four cardinal virtues, but the practise of them through the help of God's grace, and under the guiding light of divine faith, with a view, not to the life that now is, but to the life that is everlasting.

Of the four cardinal virtues, so called because all the other moral virtues hinge upon them, prudence is first. The Greeks of old, who set great store by the practise of moral virtues, called prudence "the charioteer." The business of the man who drives the chariot is to keep a watchful eye on the horses to rein them in when they are too fiery, to urge them on when they lag, and to keep them in the right road, letting them swerve from their course neither to this side nor to that. Like unto this is the office of prudence. It is the virtue that guides the steps of man in the

journey of life, and enables him to keep the golden mean wherein lies moral virtue—for vice lies ever in extremes. Thus, the man who gives of his means too freely is a spendthrift, while the man who stints in giving is apt to become a miser. Too much of even the very best thing is good for nothing; too little is short of enough. Prudence teaches us what to do, and when to do it, and how much to do at a time. It preserves justice from undue severity, sets reasonable bounds to temperance, and keeps fortitude from passing into rashness. Christian prudence, or counsel, is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It guides us by a higher light than that of reason, and its dictates often run counter to those of the merely natural virtue.

Next after prudence comes justice. It is the virtue that inclines us to give every one his due. As the rule and measure of the dealings of man with man in the ordinary affairs of life, it is known as honesty. Of character this is the very cornerstone. Given that a man is really honest, even if he lack the other virtues and be held fast in the bonds of many evil habits, there is always hope of his ultimate reform. But if he lack honesty, his reform is well nigh hopeless. If a person is not honest with men, neither will he be honest with his God. The worst form of dishonesty is that which denies to God what is His due. Indeed all dishonesty has its root in the want of the knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, who is the fount of justice and will render to every man according to his works. The true servant of God is known in Scripture as a "just man," one who is straightforward in his dealings with God and man. A constant source of temptation to dishonesty is greed, or the love of money, for which reason, perhaps, the Apostle calls it "the root of all evil." We must overcome it by pondering often those words of Our Lord, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?"

Fortitude is that moral virtue which makes us face any danger, and even death itself, in the discharge of duty. If justice, or honesty, is the very framework of character, fortitude is the bracing and the strength of it. Justice dictates the doing of what is right, but it is fortitude that says, "Let the right be done though the heavens should fall." This virtue is popularly known as courage, or pluck, or grit. But many a man who would pass with the world as courageous or plucky might quite lack the moral virtue of fortitude. A man may show great courage in doing what is wrong,

whereas it is only in doing what is right that he shows fortitude. Again, some very rash deeds may be quite plucky, but the man of true fortitude never does rash things. Once more, fortitude consists not merely in doing and in daring, but also in enduring. Indeed the very highest degree of Christian fortitude, which is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, is to be found in the martyr who endures torments and death rather than betray the faith.

Animals are divided into vertebrates, or those that have a backbone, and invertebrates, or those that have no backbone. Everyone knows that the latter class is distinctly lower in the scale of being. Christians, too—alas! that we should have to say so—admit of being divided into vertebrates and invertebrates, according as they have the backbone of fortitude in the things of faith, or have it not. And a very great number of them, indeed, far the greater number, it is to be feared, must be put in the latter degenerate class. We need to-day more of the stuff that martyrs are made of. We need Christian fortitude to do our duty as Christians, to keep the commandments of God and of His Church. How many are held back from the performance of their duties as Christians by human respect! how many by a craven and sordid fear of losing some of their earthly goods, or of missing an opportunity of adding to their store. These latter are like the Gerasens in the Gospel, who besought Jesus to depart from their country, lest He should cast out more devils, and they should lose more of their pigs (Luke viii, 32-38).

The fourth cardinal virtue is temperance. It is the virtue which holds the animal passions in check, and makes them obey the rule of right reason. Its special office is to impose moderation in the use of sensible pleasures. It is thus opposed to the two capital sins of gluttony and lust, the former of which includes all excess in eating and in drinking. It embraces as its subject virtues, abstinence, sobriety, modesty, chastity, as also meekness, which restrains the passion of anger. It will thus be seen that sobriety is but one phase of temperance, so to say, though in popular usage, the two words are made to mean one and the same thing. Sobriety is opposed not so much to the use as to the abuse of strong drink, and the resulting vice of drunkenness, one of the worst and most degrading of vices. "Temperance is good, total abstinence is better," was the motto of Cardinal Manning, one of the greatest apostles of temperance. Nor will any one question the truth or

the wisdom of the motto who realizes how dangerous and stealthy a foe is intoxicating drink. At the same time we must bear in mind that sobriety is the essential thing, and that the man who rigidly abstains from all intoxicants may be very far indeed from practising the cardinal virtue of temperance. Lust works greater havoc in souls than even drunkenness, and chastity as a moral virtue takes the palm from sobriety. It is to the chaste especially, to "the clean of heart," Our Lord has promised that "they shall see God." This, of course, does not mean that sobriety is not a great virtue and necessary to salvation. It only means that chastity is greater, and if that were possible, even more necessary.

"Be ye perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." This is the law and norm of Christian perfection. The standard of absolute perfection is God Himself, and there is no limit to the possibility of drawing nearer and nearer to Him. So long as we are in this world, it is always possible to grow more perfect, for it is always possible to add to that which is finite. And we are all of us called to perfection—"called to be saints" are the words of St. Paul to the Romans. It was to "the multitudes" the Sermon on the Mount was preached, and surely the keynote of it was, "Be ye perfect." But let there be no mistake about the matter, our Lord calls, invites, but does not command. The distinction is clear in the words He spoke to the rich young man, "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments," and "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow me." Not that, to be perfect, one must needs distribute one's worldly goods among the poor, but that one can not reach the degree of perfection here contemplated without doing so. For perfection in creatures admits of degrees, and is relative, not absolute. Indeed, human perfection is an earnest striving after perfection rather than perfection. That this relative perfection can be attained in all states and conditions of life is shown by the fact that it has been attained, and still is attained, if only we have eyes to see it. For it must be borne in mind that perfection consists, not in doing uncommon things, but in doing the common things of life uncommonly well.

The very foundation of Christian perfection is humility, which has its roots in the sense of our own sinfulness and of our own nothingness, that comes of knowing ourselves and knowing God by the light of faith. If you think of raising a lofty structure, says

St. Augustine, first think of laying deep the foundation. "Learn of me," says our blessed Lord, "for I am meek and humble of heart." This is the virtue of His predilection—humility; this is the lesson of all lessons that He came down from heaven to teach us—the lesson of lowliness. On being asked, What is the virtue most needful to the Christian? St. Augustine answered, Humility; and the second most needful? Humility; and the third most needful? Humility. Through pride the angels fell; through pride, because they would become like unto God, knowing good and evil, our first parents fell; through pride men who seemed to have climbed the steep of Christian perfection, and were looked upon as pillars of the Church, have fallen. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"—this defines the essential condition of advancement in the kingdom of Christ.

But if humility is the foundation of Christian perfection, the crown and completion of it is charity—the love of God above all things for His own sake, and of one's neighbor as oneself for God's sake. Or, rather, charity may be said to be the author and finisher of the work, for love is operative, and love is a builder. "Two loves," says St. Augustine, "built two cities; one the love of self unto contempt of God, the other the love of God unto contempt of self." Let this love of God be the dominant force of our lives and the fashioner of our character. Let us build for ourselves temples, which will grow in grace and stateliness with the years and reach even to heaven.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

XLI. THE BASIS OF VIRTUE

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Be ye holy because I the Lord your God am holy."—Lev. xix, 42.

SYNOPSIS.—I. God is the only absolute good—His creatures participate in His goodness; man pre-eminently so. All things made for God; hence God is the supreme moral law. This law not arbitrary, but immutable, necessary. Moral goodness consists in conformity to God.

II. Virtue is either natural or supernatural; the essential distinction between the two is found in the motive and source of the virtuous act. God must be the motive, source and end of every supernatural act.

III. False systems of virtue springing from men. 1. Stoicism. 2. Epicureanism. 3. Utilitarianism. 4. Altruism.

IV. Naturalism leading to pride, pleasure, sensuality the fatal defect of such systems. Human conceptions followed—secondary ends aimed at. Supernatural should be sought after. It alone can satisfy the whole man for God is its reward.

I. "None is good but God alone" (Luke xviii, 19). When Moses asked God that he might see His glory, or see His face, God answered, "I will show thee all good" (Exod. xxxiii, 19). Not only is our God infinitely good, but He is goodness itself, the sum total of all that is good. As He is supreme being, and as nothing else has being except by His operation, so all the goodness that any creature has exists in it by reason of its participation in God's goodness. God has expressed Himself outwardly in that creature, and has communicated to it some limited resemblance to Himself. So, all that God has made is good, and everything that is good holds that quality, not from itself, but from God. Of each class of creatures made in the beginning it is said, "God saw that it was good." As our works, as creations of our thought, bear, each in itself, the stamp of our individuality, so we may see God reflected in all that He has made, and know Him through them. "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also and divinity" (Rom. i, 20). In the outer world we see an almost infinite variety of beauty and goodness, which represents the inexhaustible richness of the treasures of the divine mind, and at the same time a unity and harmony, which figure the simplicity of God's nature. Everything that men examine shows them marvels of skilful adaptation, of wonderful

foresight, of enormous power and the most minute care, of goodness, truth, loveliness, benevolence. These things are not, in themselves, wise, benevolent, morally good, for they are not made in the likeness of God. They are only vestiges of God; they witness to these perfections in Him.

Man is different from external nature. He is made in the image and likeness of God; he has something in common with God; he is not merely an evidence of an intelligence and free will existing outside himself, but he is himself a free intelligence. The divine perfections are not only to be argued from man, but they exist in him; if he be what God intended him to be, they exist in him in the form of virtues; a man is, actually, good, wise, strong, benevolent, pure, holy and the rest.

All things were made by God on account of Himself (Prov. xvi, 4); that is, His glory; that is, for the manifestation of His infinitely rich and infinitely harmonious nature. Created things fulfil their object of existence by thus exhibiting God's perfections, Man too is made for the same object. He has received the impress of God upon himself, and manifests Him, but in a much nobler manner. His intelligence and will have a creative power under God, and it is their function to produce other representations of God, and to show in action the divine perfections, in those forms in which they have been communicated to man. A man is morally good; he is fulfilling the end of his creation, so far as he becomes conformed to the divine nature, and copies the action of God in his own actions.

Thus the divine existence, the divine nature, the divine perfections, are the original, the normal rule by which we have to model ourselves. In other words, God is Himself the Supreme Law. God is the moral law. These moral precepts which are laid down for our guidance are only statements of the divine perfections as adapted to particular circumstances of human life.

We must therefore not look at the law of human life and the law of Christian life as an arbitrary collection of commands, chosen because God wished to give us some rules to go by; nor as commands suggested by certain accidental reasons of time, or person, or convenience, or becomingness; nor yet as commands which might have been omitted, or might have been otherwise than they are, or that may at some future time be changed. No; our law is fixed, immutable, eternal, necessary. It can never be changed;

it could never have been but what it is; because it depends on Him who is always the self same, and can never change; or rather it is Himself, the Unchangeable, the Immortal. It was the law before it was stated in words; it is the law in every one of the million stars of heaven if any of them are inhabited by intelligent creatures. The moral law is in the very nature of things. Certain actions are good, not simply because they are commanded but independently of all commands; they are commanded because they are a correspondence with God. And in like manner other acts are bad, not on account of the prohibition of the disobedience involved in them, but they are bad in themselves as being out of harmony with God, and therefore they are forbidden.

Moral goodness, or virtue, therefore consists essentially in conformity to God; and sin is that action in free agents which has no counterpart in God, which is non-existent in Him, and therefore is the contradictory of Him who embraces in Himself all existence. Justice, mercy, peace, benevolence, purity, prudence, are in God; they are essentially good; they are divine perfections. When we elicit one of these acts we do something which is essentially good; our action resembles the divine action; it is a virtue. Impurity, dishonesty, hatred, strife, do not exist in God; they have no existence of their own; their existence in us is only the absence, or the extinction in us of that which corresponds to one of God's perfections.

II. We go on now to consider that, besides being the basis of virtue as the model of it, God enters in other ways into the practise of virtue. They are different grades in our conformity to the rule of life which is in God. Our virtue may belong to the natural or the supernatural order; and it is a matter of eternal importance to us that it should be of the right kind. Natural virtue is a real conformity to the law of our being, but it proceeds from natural sources and natural motives. It may be the consequence of our temperament, or of our knowledge of science and such like, or of the fashions of our time, or of climate and worldly surroundings. We may be induced to practise it for the sake of gain, or health, or because we want to be like others, and so we may do it for our benefit and advancement in this life. An act in such a case may be substantially good, but yet it is not of necessity a good act supernaturally. It may be so deficient in some supernatural element as to be worthless.

1. God must be the motive of all supernatural goodness; we must be virtuous in order to be like to God. We must not only strive to be perfect *as* our heavenly father is perfect, but we must be holy *because* the Lord Our God is holy. Any other motive is lower than God, and is therefore imperfect. It would be a disorder, an offense against the nature of things, to turn the means into the end, to put that which is subordinate in place of the principal thing, and to rest in that which has no value except as a step to something more important. As God is the object and end of all endeavor, we are giving His honor to another if we make that other our sole object. So that if we can set our minds on wealth, or power, or pleasure, and exclude the thought of God, as many do, we are guilty of a kind of idolatry. So there is a literal truth in the strong expressions of St. Paul, that covetousness is a serving of idols, and that some make a god of their belly. A virtue that does not look to God can not attain to God; it may be rewarded by gaining the object it aims at, but it can never merit the reward of possessing God in Heaven. In other cases a natural virtue may become a sin under the influence of a wrong motive. A man who labors hard in works of benevolence, but who has self for his object and seeks for praise and the gratification of his vanity, has done actions that are substantially good, but they take their character from the pride which is their object, and become sins instead of supernatural virtues. Religion is the noblest of virtues and the parent of many others. If its object is a creature it becomes the horrible sin of idolatry. If its object is God, not as made known by Himself through faith, but as understood by the light of nature, or as disguised by the fancies of men, it becomes the sin of Deism or of heresy. Therefore, God, as revealed by Himself through His appointed channels of faith, must be our motive in practising virtue, if that virtue is to be supernatural, and is to receive anything more than a reward on earth.

2. Again, God is necessary to supernatural virtue, as suggesting its acts to us and giving us strength to accomplish them. "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will" (Phil. ii, 13). Our Lord says the same thing; "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him" (John vi, 44). For the supernatural state is so far superior to our own conceptions and needs, that we can not desire

it, can not call upon the Lord Jesus for it, and still less attain it, without an exceptional influx of God upon us.

3. It is not only for the supernaturalizing of virtue that God is necessary as its source and motive. Some have indulged the dream of building up systems of natural morality or of civic virtues without reference to God. They would abolish the supernatural as an antiquated delusion, and would have mankind to do only a natural work, by purely natural means. They aspire to rival the glories and the service of Christianity without the aid or the idea of God. What folly! There can be no fixed authoritative standard even of natural virtue except God. No motive without God is strong enough to establish itself durably and widely against universal power of selfishness. Even the virtues which are within men's comprehension are beyond their reach on account of strong temptations and general weakness. The natural man has to say with St. Paul: "To will is indeed present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not" (Rom. vii, 18). Many of the virtues by which Christianity has achieved its greatest successes are not found in any but the supernatural form. How is the natural man to rise to these without religion, without prayer, without God? Such attempts are doomed to inevitable failure. Our Lord Jesus has said: "Every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matt. xv, 13).

III. These great truths have not been recognized by all men. In the pagan times there was a very imperfect knowledge of God, and men did not know how to refer all things to Him. In modern days we have had the revolt against God, and men "have changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. i, 25). There have been various classes of schools who have, for one or other reason, looked out for some created thing, to substitute, instead of God, as the basis and motive of virtue. They have not succeeded in finding one, nor have they been able to induce more than a handful of studious men to adopt their issues and practise goodness in the motives that they have laid down. They have founded schools of philosophy, but they have never influenced mankind. Those who reject God can not arrive at an idea of what virtue is. They see it in certain instances and admire it. They try to account for it; they analyze it to see what it consists in; they try to find the motive which has led some to practise it, a motive which they may propose to others

in the hope of making them virtuous. In this investigation one man is struck by one quality and another man by some other quality, each according to his natural disposition. They have taken hold of this or that quality as if it were really the predominant element, and have tried to make out that it was the essence of virtue, while forgetting or neglecting all its other qualities.

1. Thus, in early times certain strong and austere men, observing the perversity and excess that there is in all human impulses, and the evils that flow from unrestrained indulgence in them, imagined that all virtue consisted in self-control, in stern repression. These were the Stoics. They mastered themselves, they were indifferent to pain, to riches, to death; they created a nobler type of character endowed with certain heroic qualities, they command the admiration even of Christians. It is quite true that self-restraint is an essential element of virtue. Our Lord tells us to deny ourselves and take up our cross. His Apostle bids us slay the old man of sin which is within us. So it is a great mistake to think that this is the whole of virtue. There was no room in that system for the gentleness, tenderness, love, that Our Lord taught; it had no hold on the heart and affections, and could not meet all the wants of human nature, nor compel universal acceptance. It was also defective as engendering too much self-reliance and then pride.

2. Another school was that of the Epicureans. Its founder rightly saw that virtue was happiness, but he erred by making the pleasure in an action the test of its goodness. In the hands of ordinary corrupt men this doctrine soon degenerated into sheer sensuality. Each man of course must be the judge of his own pleasure, and in the absence of a spiritual motive and divine grace, he will choose the intoxicating pleasure which passion offers him in the present, rather than the tranquil pleasure which reason promises in the distant future.

3. In our own times much the same idea as this has been proposed but under a different form. Our godless age sets great store by that which is practical, tangible, useful for every-day life; it prefers these qualities to those which it considers transcendental, and imaginary, and abstract. Utility is proposed as the practical test of goodness and virtue. But utilitarianism is much the same as Epicureanism; for there is not much difference between each man seeking that which is materially useful, and seeking his present pleasure. His own utility is what he can best judge about. He will

seek his own as being the more prominent, and he will choose that which is present, rather than the future advantage of other men. Utility and pleasure are but slightly varied forms of selfishness, and selfishness is the very opposite of virtue.

Nothing can be more evident than this, that these splendid acts of virtue that have extorted the admiration of mankind were conspicuously devoid both of pleasure and immediate utility. They would lose all their grandeur in our eyes if there were any suspicion of calculation or selfishness about them. It is clear too that if ever mankind should come down universally to considering their own pleasures and utility in every action, there would be an end at once to all self-sacrifice, generosity, disinterestedness, heroism, and love. It is true, indeed, that the highest utility, as well as the purest pleasure, is to be found in lives of virtue; but on the other hand, it would destroy the virtue of any act if in it men looked to utility or pleasure. So a noble action meets well-deserved praise, but to do it solely for the sake of that praise would be miserable hypocrisy. A really high, grand motive is necessary in order that an act be thoroughly good. The principle of utility is good enough for a guide in the making of machinery or building a railroad; it may serve to encourage some sort of virtues, such as the industrial virtues of thrift, regularity, good workmanship and the like; but in making man perfect all round, and in bringing out the grandeur and beauty of character which are so distinctive of the servants of God, it can never compete with the Christian idea.

4. There is yet another system of virtue which prevails widely in our day. That is the attempt to reduce all goodness to benevolence and the service of man. It is a godless system in spite of much good that is in it, and is not much more than an improved utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is a sort of "enlightened selfishness." This other system seeks the utility of other men, their temporal and material utility. As far as it goes it is good; it has reduced many of the great miseries of life, it has brought into action many amicable qualities and a certain amount of unselfishness; but it is insufficient, and is a poor substitute for that which it imitates—Christian charity. Charity begins with the love of God, it goes on to the love of our neighbor in God, and for God's sake it has produced the most heroic devotedness, and is the original from which all benevolence has been copied. Charity is one of the great peculiarities of Christianity, and the chief thing in it which has excited the admiration

of the outer world. It has seemed to those who love what is practical and do not know God, to be the very ideal of virtue. They have taken it up with much energy and have tried to impress the character of the world upon it. They have eliminated the idea of God and changed divine charity into what they call philanthropy, or humanity, or altruism. Man has been substituted for God.

There are many points of weakness and imperfection in this kind of virtue. First its object is a low one as compared with the object of Christian goodness, God. Man is not a final cause; he was made for something else greater than himself, so he is not fitted to be the ultimate aim of virtuous action. Whatever excellence he has comes to Him as being the image of God. Therefore, if we are to take a true view of him and deal with him successfully, we must consider man in relation to God. Moreover, man is not lovable in himself. His malice, his meannesses, his ingratitude, are enough to weary out any merely human love. The natural impulses of men toward one another are of hostility rather than of brotherly love. In order to love mankind truly and universally, we need to be able to view them as in some way identified with God, and we need the example of Our Lord's infinite love for men in all their sin and ingratitude. Further still, our relations to our fellowmen are not our only ones; we have duties to ourselves, principally of self-restraint, and above all we have duties to God. A system of simple benevolence which does not take account of these other duties must be inconsistent and unstable, and must soon degenerate into sentiment and weakness.

IV. All these four systems of virtue are imperfect. Each is the presentation of one of the many qualities which true virtue possesses. The human mind in its imperfection is not able to conceive a perfect being—an ideal which will serve as a model to all men at all times; it cannot grasp the multiplicity of the forms of virtue; it is too low to be able to imagine virtue in its full sublimity. It is corrupt and blinded too; it is deceived by its impulses and by false ideas when they prevail widely, and it thinks that many things are virtues which are really vices. Without looking beyond human nature into the divine it is impossible to get a complete view of virtue. As we contemplate the perfections of God we rise to wonder, admiration, and then to love of Him. And this love is the source of our strength. Love is strong as death; and only this mighty force can enable men to conquer passion and tempta-

tion and sacrifice self for the sake of God and virtue. The sight of God before us is necessary to keep our virtue pure from selfishness. Self is insidious, obtrusive, and forces its way into the sanctuary of our heart and conscience. Self is the nearest object to us and therefore the largest in the field of view; it must of necessity dwarf all other objects that are less than the infinity of God. However noble natural virtue may be at first, it will become tainted by some admixture of pride, selfwill, interest, or self-seeking, unless it be made supernatural and consecrated exclusively to God.

The world, in each epoch, or each country, has had its ideal of virtue, and this has sometimes been a high one and very admirable. Its highest examples are worthy of the esteem and imitation of all Christian men. For in virtue, as in other things, it sometimes happens that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of the light" (Luke xvi, 8). Many therefore have been inclined to esteem such natural virtue as a higher thing than the supernatural virtues of imperfect Christians. But look more closely and what does this worldly virtue amount to before God?

1. In its origin it follows human conceptions and not divine. It depends on custom, fashion, the popular opinion of men. So it varies in different grades of society, in different times and places; it advances sometimes, recedes at other times. Under some circumstances it has a very lofty character, at other times it is very low; but throughout all times its nature and its motives are the same; it is always equally unmeritorious and defective in the sight of God. Its rule of perfection is the virtue that happens to be easiest at the time to men, and the vices that happen to be prevalent. So one good quality will be exalted to the highest place while another more important will be held of no account. Thus in one community murder will be a slight offense, in another lying, in another highway robbery, in another commercial swindling. One community will esteem it as the greatest enormity to deceive in gambling, but rather a virtue to deceive and ruin an innocent life. In another community drunken profligacy is a quality which will excuse any number of other transgressions. Again, at times humility, meekness, forgiveness of injuries are considered contemptible, and personal cleanliness, or taste in dress, or pleasantness in society, as more important than all the Ten Commandments. Worldly codes of virtue have certain points in which there is a likeness to God; but this is merely accidental; such virtues are not proposed because they

are the service of God, but because they are the service of man; and while there are some points of likeness to God there are many more points of unlikeness. A man may thus have many really good qualities, and yet be an enemy of God and in the state of damnation. He may be perfect according to the prevailing code of human morality, and yet have no conformity to God, because he has no desire for it, and therefore he has no claim for an eternal reward.

2. Human morality is defective, because, in its aim, it seeks only that which is secondary and not the chief thing. It proposes things that are indeed god-like, but only for the sake of the temporal gains which they bring. The virtues which mankind in general admire and enforce are those which promote comfort, safety, the good order of society. The worship of God is practised because it is respectable, and religion is upheld as being the most efficient and cheapest police force for the maintenance of order. It is indeed true that temporal benefits will follow as the reward of divine virtue. Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you: but if you seek first those other things, you will miss the kingdom. It is hypocrisy to practise piety for the sake of lucre; and a virtue is no better than the virtues of the Pharisees if it seeks any other object than God.

The average virtue of the world is therefore unreal and of no use before God. Its deficiencies are as fatal; its excellencies are of no use except so far as they may lead on to supernatural virtue. We must beware of goodness of this sort; for it may well be that while we think ourselves to be serving God, we are only conforming ourselves to worldly virtues and worldly errors. Let us copy indeed the natural virtues of worldly men, as far as they go, but let us remember that unless our justice abound more than that we shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

How admirable is supernatural virtue as God has revealed it to us! It alone is complete, because it draws on that source which is the infinite total of all goodness. It embraces all the goodness which men have vainly sought after in their different systems. It can satisfy at once all the aspirations of the human heart, whether for happiness, or utility, or sympathy, or action. It is at once lofty and lowly, heroic without being arrogant, tender without being sickly, austere and not harsh, useful for man's best interests, giving the only pleasure that is not injurious. God should be the one

object of our life; we should seek to imitate Him in all things. We should do our duty from the highest motives; not seeking our own advantage, and not seeking to please man; not for the natural facility we have in certain virtues, not even for the hope of a future reward principally. But we should imitate the perfections of God as they are manifested to us in the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, out of admiration and love of them, as being essentially good in themselves, and constituting our perfection.

XLII. MORALITY AND RELIGION

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"Other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus."—I Cor. iii, 11.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The law of God is the foundation of all virtue. The attempt of the wicked to drive out God, Church and supernatural morality. The success of the wicked.*

II. *History clearly proves that religion has ever been the basis of civilization and morality.*

III. *Christianity has set before the world the highest moral ideal—supplying motives, giving examples, preaching eternal truths within the scope of all men, solidifying all by the necessary authority.*

IV. *Religion has unified all the diverse elements of life. Utility not a sufficient motive for virtue; it is too low as a standard, too uncertain, too selfish, too brutalizing.*

V. *Answer to the objection that some of the noblest men have been without religion.*

VI. *Reason teaches that religion is the only secure basis of morality. It teaches our relations and hence our duties to God, to our neighbor, to ourselves. Religion supplies the sanction necessary for morality.*

I. We shall consider to-day that dogmatic religion, of which the Catholic Church is the chief and the only complete expression, is the necessary basis of all morality. The eternal law of God, as manifested by revelation, as witnessed by our conscience, as taught by the Catholic Church, is the foundation not only of the sublime virtues of the religious state, but of those more homely and human virtues which help us in the ordinary relations of life, and which are necessary for the well-being of the family, of the state, of human society.

There are many men throughout the world intently engaged in destroying the work of God and forwarding the reign of evil. Their hatred of the Catholic Church has extended till it embraces all Christianity and all forms of religion. They are seeking to uproot all spirituality, and as for such parts of the moral law as they know to be necessary for men, they are endeavoring to find a new foundation for them apart from God and His law. Their idea is that morality is separable from religion, and that the training of the intellect by science, and of the imagination by art, will suffice to curb all the evil impulses of human nature, and promote virtue,

happiness, and prosperity. Utility instead of divine love, temporal considerations instead of the eternal and supernatural, will, it is thought, make men gentle and strong, self-restrained and benevolent. They propose founding a new code better than the Ten Commandments, disregarding the commands of the Church, dispensing with the higher virtues of faith, and hope, and charity, and the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, not requiring the example of Jesus Christ and the saints, not asking the aid of divine grace in founding and maintaining it. They look forward to a splendid epoch of human perfection, when God shall be dethroned, and man be lord of all, emancipated from divine faith which they call superstition, and divine law which they call tyranny. They would like to preserve that moral order which is the fruit of Christianity, and yet they would cut down the tree which alone bears that fruit. They have risen to a certain height of civilization and morality by means of religion, and they wish to cast down the ladder by which they have mounted. They take out the keystone and expect the arch to stand, firmer than ever. They affect to believe that man can observe his duties toward himself and his fellowmen without doing, or even knowing, the duties which he owes to God.

The efforts of God's enemies meet with a certain amount of success. In many countries they have introduced a secular, godless education for children, which is rearing a generation almost devoid of the religious sense. The exercise of religion has been restrained, schools have been closed, the education of the clergy has been stopped and the students sent into barracks as soldiers; priests and bishops have been prosecuted, fined, imprisoned, exiled, besides being watched and annoyed in many petty ways. Churches have been destroyed or devoted to profane uses, the religious orders, with their numerous works of benevolence, rescue, education, example, organization, have been suppressed in one country after another. God allows His foes to work their will on His Church as upon His Son in the Passion. Religion suffers, the Church is humbled, and she is robbed of many of her children. Some are discouraged, some are alienated, good is prevented, souls are being destroyed. One thing the enemies of religion will never succeed in doing: they will never build up again the edifice of human life, and morality, and well-being, on any other foundation than the one laid by religion, *i. e.*, on Christ Jesus.

II. When we look back on the past history of mankind, we observe that religion has always been the basis and the support of civilization and of morality. A great writer of the last century has said that a religion, even a false one, is the best guarantee of virtue (Montesquieu). A false religion is one that is incomplete, it may contain positive and destructive falsity, but it contains some of the elements of true religion; and so efficacious are these that even their fragments help to make men virtuous. The heathen recognized spontaneously that religion gave an authority to laws, and so a permanence to social institutions, which nothing else could give. They founded their cities in religion, they placed their legislation under its protection. Patriotism was inspired less by the beauty of the city and its being the capital or the birthplace than by the religious sanctity that enshrouded it. Morality indeed, as we understand it, was unknown to them; it was not an offshoot of pagan religion, but the teaching of certain philosophical schools; still, the ancients knew that nothing bound the conscience and mind of men more surely than religion.

The moral system in the modern world is the creation of the Christian religion. The will of God, the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the hope of future happiness, have furnished the ultimate reasons for leading a good life. The characters that have most won men's respect, that have influenced the world most deeply, have been those formed under the influence of religion. Respect for authority and the permanence of political institutions depended less on their material force than on the fact that they were representative of divine authority. Civil laws had a binding force stronger than the penalties surrounding them because they were accepted as the promulgation of the laws of God. The religious spirit gave birth also to chivalry, courtesy, benevolence, honesty, patience, loyalty, courage, disinterestedness, the sense of human brotherhood, the love of liberty. In fact, what we mean by morality, *i. e.*, the principles of a noble and beautiful life, were the outcome of Christian doctrines about God, the human soul, the fall and Redemption, the person of Jesus Christ, the dignity of His Blessed Mother, free-will and responsibility, sin, and heaven and hell.

The triumphant power of these religious doctrines is to be read in every page of the history of Christendom. Among the nations of the old pagan times, among unchristian or uncatholic people,

there are some individuals who stand out as examples of heroism and their names are held in everlasting honor. But that which is exceptional elsewhere is of daily occurrence in that religion which is the perfection of Christianity. There we have the heroic constancy of tens of thousands of martyrs of every race and condition of life, of every age and sex. There we find the marvelous lives of Apostles, confessors, and virgins. There is a superabundance of benevolence overflowing on every side, and providing remedies for every ill, and comfort for every sorrow among mankind. There is that self-abnegation which leads, not merely one, like Sakya-Mani, the light of Asia, to make a great renunciation for the sake of mankind, but which leads thousands every year to abandon home and family, possessions and pleasures, as dear to them as to the great Indian prince, in order to make themselves the unpaid servants of God's children, God's poor, and God's afflicted ones. And there are the countless multitudes of nameless ones who, in lowly homes, or laboring in shops and fields, practise the most difficult virtues. So common have these beautiful lives become that many look on them as being the ordinary product of human nature, instead of being, as they are, the creation of supernatural grace working through faith in supernatural truths. It is not too much to say that all there is among men at this day of high principle, sense of duty, and generosity, is due either to the direct or the indirect influence of Christian dogma.

The severity of the struggle against immorality and the power of religion are shown by what we read in history about the violent passions, the outbreaks of horrible crime, and the deep corruption which have prevailed at various times and places during the reign of Christianity. This shows us how deep-seated and how universal is the source of profligacy in fallen man, it shows us the raw substance out of which Christianity has molded its saints and heroes, and assures us that here will always exist both the material for new conquests and the power of carrying them through.

III. It will hardly be denied by any one that a high moral ideal, so far as it has existed, has been the work of Christianity. It is generally supposed that if you stop up the source, the streams will be dried up which take their origin from it. The anti-Christian moralists of the present propose to do this, and they expect, or profess to expect, that the stream of pure morality will be fuller

and brighter than ever. If the influence of Christian doctrine and the life of Our Lord be removed, those who know the degraded state to which men have fallen in past times, when unrestrained by religion, can well prognosticate the disorder, the crime, and the general cataclysm which will follow. Without their foundation, the present system of morality, the present motives to a good life, must all collapse, and there is nothing to take their place.

Supernatural revelation alone is capable of impressing men with ideas great enough, deep enough, broad enough, strong enough to lead them to accept and to carry out a difficult system of morality.

1. The passions of men are fearfully strong; their selfishness is all-engrossing, their interests are present and absorbing, and take very many forms. The influence of others for evil is very strong, too; one can corrupt many; and if one is exposed to contagion among a large number of the corrupt, it requires an immense force to enable him to resist. The very highest and strongest motives are needed. Christianity provides them by telling us of God, the all-powerful, who has made the moral laws. It can prove to us that all interests here are small, by contrasting them with the infinite and eternal interests of life in heaven or an unending death in hell. If the example of our companions is strong for evil, Christianity points to the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, invisible indeed to our mortal eyes, but actually living and actually present among us, and in some sort visible to the eye of faith.

2. If mankind is required to be thoroughly and consistently good, a motive is required that will penetrate beneath the surface of life. And it is not every motive, however strong it be, that will do this. The ordinary laws that prevail among men do not pretend to mold more than their exterior conduct, and they seldom succeed in doing more. Human systems of law or morality can not enter into sufficient detail to meet all the small particulars of life. There are duties in the domestic circle, duties of kindness, patience, good-temper; there are duties in commercial life, duties of industry, and fairness, and generosity; above all there are internal duties of thought, the violation of which can not fall under the cognizance of public laws to be reprobated or punished. But Christianity teaches us that internal virtue is even more important than external; that to purify the outside of the cup or platter and leave the inside foul is abominable hypocrisy; that God sees the motives of the

heart and judges us according to them, and not according to what is visible to men.

3. Further, religion furnishes a broad and permanent basis for virtue, which is suitable to all times, and places, and diversities of race and cultivation. Its truths are sufficiently within the intelligence of all men, its interests concern all alike, its revelation is fixed. On the other hand, among men fashions and customs are in a continual state of flux. The temporal interests of each are, or seem to be, in conflict with the interests of others. The natural tendencies of nations to certain virtues or to certain vices vary with climate, and epoch, and mode of living. Laws of all kinds vary. Even where principles are the same, there is a difference in the way of applying them.

4. An authority also is required to give weight to a system that is to regulate the lives of all; and outside of religion, outside the authority of God and those whom He has delegated, no such authority has ever, or can be ever, recognized. Will the universe of men ever allow some one other man to impose his will upon them? A few have done so to some small extent by virtue of irresistible force of mind or of arms; but, after all, how small the circle and short the duration of their authority compared with the greatness of the world! When, in former times, kings or parliaments went beyond their proper functions of statecraft, and interfered with the private life of their subjects, their edicts were considered tyrannical and always fell quickly into contempt. Still less is it likely that mankind would accept a whole system of living on the authority of some infidel scribblers and lecturers who have no reputation except among a handful of others like themselves. God may indeed be set aside, neglected, disobeyed, but certainly mankind will never allow one of themselves to usurp His place; they may resist the authority of God, but they will never admit the supreme authority of any one less than Him.

IV. For any great code of laws, for any great movement among men, there must be some great idea, some principle, to give it unity, to direct its details, to express its character, like the theme that runs through a musical composition of many parts. The religious idea is such a theme, and it has been found capable of organizing all the various movements, duties, and aspirations of human life. What do the enemies of the Christian faith propose as a substitute? The chief thing mentioned is utility. Actions are to

be adjudged good or bad according as they are in the long run useful or prejudicial to mankind in their temporal interests. It is thought that this will be a sufficient guide for men in public and private life, and down to the smallest details. It is thought that enlightenment will enable them to judge accurately what is useful or not, and that general progress will make them choose that which is more useful rather than less, useful to the race rather than to the individual. Surely nothing so unreasonable was ever proposed by man, no expectation was ever so foolish. A few brief considerations will be sufficient to prove this.

1. How low a motive of action is the mere usefulness of our acts compared with the thought of promoting God's glory! Few motives could be more mean or sordid. Even the thought of earthly glory and honor, insufficient as this may be, is more noble than is utility. This is a degradation of the idea which all men have of goodness. All have recognized that there is something admirable about certain acts or virtues in themselves, quite independently of the payment earned or their practical results. To make a pair of boots for sale is a most useful and necessary act; to risk your life and use it in trying to save another man's is certainly not a useful act. How degraded a system must it be which would make this to be an act of less merit than making boots or slaughtering an ox for food.

2. It may indeed be said that every good thing or act is useful, and that what is really useful in the highest sense is also good. But if you determine goodness by inquiring if a thing be useful, you are reversing the order of things. The qualities are different though found conjoined. There is an intrinsic goodness in certain acts which does not depend on their usefulness. So far as they are useful they are so because they are good.

3. The degree of usefulness in a thing is often very problematical, and so remote that it can not be discovered till long afterward. An action that is really good will often at the moment appear useless; and a bad action is generally cloaked by an appearance of immediate usefulness. So that this test is frequently misleading. If men wish to elect always the most useful course, the only safe method is to choose that which is good in itself. A great deal of the most infamous legislation, most of the misgovernment of the world, has resulted from a mistaken notion of utility. If men could see into the future, and if they were infallible in their judg-

ments, this test of actions might be applied with some success; but as things are, men are sure to sacrifice that which is really good, and useful in the long run, for some superficial appearance of present utility.

4. Utility may be explained in a higher sense or in a lower. Those who would make it the motive of human actions and the test of their goodness understand by it that which is useful to mankind in general, and to the prosperity of the race, and not that which is useful only to the individual at present, as crime generally is. But to aim at utility of that kind involves the extreme of self-sacrifice. And what motive is proposed to move men to that preternatural virtue? It is not in accordance with the instincts of the ordinary man. Will he take up this new line of conduct merely because a few others are impressed with the grandeur of the idea of some transcendent utility? The majority will say, "What has humanity done for me that I should sacrifice myself for a humanity unknown to me?" Some few may devote themselves without remuneration to the service of others; but how few they are outside the pale of the Catholic Church! She alone has the secret of this heroic abnegation, and that secret is not earthly utility, but the love of God. We may be almost entirely certain, therefore, that utility, as understood by men generally, will mean their own private and immediate interests. They will learn from these doctrines that selfishness is the first and only law of life and goodness. Their axiom of conduct will be, "Get all you can, and never mind the means." They will become convinced in practise that the general utility of all is best served by each man seeking solely his own utility. This is actually the teaching of political economists, who naturally have to take a more practical and workable view than the abstract moralists. They have not hesitated to say that the condition of a nation's progress is the selfishness of all, "enlightened selfishness" they call it, but that makes it little better. The idea of utility instead of being the foundation of a new moral code, would only turn out to be the destruction of whatever little of morality and goodness still survive in the world.

V. It is necessary to advert to those instances, occasionally alleged, of men who have led decent or even good lives, and yet who have acknowledged no supernatural moral law, or perhaps not even a god. And indeed there have been some, whose lives, as

far as we can see, are a reproach to very many Christians. And it is said that these are examples of what natural good principle and training will achieve among men when religion is destroyed. We may reply:

1. That these examples are exceedingly few and not at present sufficiently numerous to establish the rule.

2. Their case is like that of certain men exceptionally talented, who without any regular instruction have become astronomers or artists. We can not from such instances conclude that regular instruction in the arts or sciences is unnecessary, or prejudicial to proficiency in them.

3. These men have not been free from the indirect influences of religion. An early religious education or high example have influenced them, and they have accepted the Christian morality for its beauty or excellence, although rejecting the doctrinal basis of it. The heaven has acted on them, although secretly.

4. A good life of the kind named often leads a man at the end of his days to accept Christianity; evidently grace has been working in him all through, but the final call has been delayed to the eleventh hour.

5. The case of a few naturally good, though irreligious, men is no criterion as to the probable conduct of an entire generation or country without religion. The argument does not extend from them to those others who are not under the influence of early religious associations, who are not restrained by philosophy, refinement, sense of honor and propriety. The infidel multitude are more likely to take the view of that man who, having been restrained by his scientific pursuits and early memories from sinful grossness of life, said in his last days that he was sorry he had taken the trouble to restrain himself and lead a moral life, when he did not acknowledge the religious need of it.

VI. Unprejudiced consideration should suffice to prove to all that religion is the necessary and only basis of a real and consistent moral life. Our duties to our Maker are the first, and from those are derived all the duties we owe to society and ourselves. The superstructure depends on the foundation. In general it is most true that a man can not be a good member of his family or his country unless he is a good member of the kingdom of God. Not only is religion the basis of morality, but the one, true, perfect form of religion is the only source for that renewal of virtue which

is so much required at the present day. In undeveloped stages of civilization it has been possible for incipient forms of religion to supply sufficient light and guidance for some sort of moral life; but an age enlightened, free, and progressive, needs more perfect instruments to meet its requirements. There must be a logical and firm basis for a system of living, and its laws must be well defined, just, and reasonable; otherwise the increased powers of mankind will only lead them more rapidly to social dissolution and the eternal loss of their souls. There can be no stability, no sacredness in any system of life, unless it is reared upon some sacred and unquestionable principle. A great preacher of the last generation said: "There can be no society without laws, no laws without morality, no morality without religion" (Mgr. Fray), and it may be added, no religion without supernatural doctrines. This is only another expression of the truth contained in our text: "Other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (I Cor. iii, 11).

XLIII. THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN: ITS SANCTIFICATION

BY THE REV. H. G. HUGHES

"This is the will of God, your sanctification."—I Thess. iv, 3.

SYNOPSIS.—*The Christian religion more than a mere philosophy—it excels all philosophies, not only in the sublimity of its teaching, but in this that it is practical; it shows how to be virtuous. Astonishment of heathen world at sublime virtue of Christians. Examples of these virtues. Christianity does the same work still. The secret of all this—love of a Person—viz., of Jesus Christ. Proof of this seen in the history of the Church and the lives of saints and holy people, and even ordinary Christians. Hence we see that the sanctification of daily life depends on this love of Jesus Christ. We must bring Him before us by faith. Bright example of this in St. Agnes, as represented to us in the office for St. Agnes' day. This picture of the Christian type no fancy but a fact. It is nothing less than this that we must aim at, sinners as well as saints.*

Religious exercises that will sanctify our lives, if based upon the love of Jesus Christ;

I. On waking.

II. Morning prayers.

III. A glance at the possible dangers and the duties of the day; remembrance that life is a warfare.

IV. During the day—in work or recreation—the remembrance of God.

V. Intercourse with others—the law of charity.

VI. Duties of our state of life.

VII. General rule to use the things of time for our eternal salvation.

VIII. Pious reading—the manner of it; its high importance.

IX. The end of the day—prayer and self-examination, and contrition for sin.

X. Intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints.

Conclusion.

The Christian, Catholic religion, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, is more than merely a beautiful and profound philosophy: or rather, we may say that *because* it is more than a philosophy, it is, of all philosophies that the world has ever known, at once the most sublime and the only truly satisfying philosophy of human life.

The old philosophies taught some intellectual truth about man, and about God—and, indeed, a surprising amount of such truth: surprising, that is, if we put aside the fact that the best heathen philosophy, such as that of Plato and Aristotle, was a providential preparation for the Gospel that followed it, and completed, by super-

natural revelation, those teachings of reason rightly exercised which we may term the natural revelation of God to men.

And the great difference between Christianity and even the best system of mere philosophy consists in this—that Christianity is eminently practical. The philosophers could tell men very largely what they ought to do—could lay down the ethical and moral teaching that conscience makes known to us; but they could not show the mass of men *how* to overcome the passions which hindered them from following out that law “written in their hearts”; their philosophy could not supply a principle strong enough to induce self-sacrifice and self-conquest.

This Christianity did; and did effectually; and at once produced the fairest fruits of virtue, so that what to the heathen was heroic and exceptional; to be admired and wondered at rather than imitated, became the everyday standard of life for thousands in all ranks and conditions of life.

What must have been the astonishment of the heathen world at finding in its midst a body of men and women who thought not of self; to whom self-denial and sacrifice for others was not only a daily duty, but a high privilege; who felt themselves bound to be content with their lot, however hard, however obscure; to whom ambition seemed unknown—or who, if they had it, made its object—its greatly coveted object—nothing else than torment, suffering and death for the principle which they held and by which they lived. Ambition, avarice, envy, anger, pride, and lust—things which heathen philosophy never could banish—were unknown to the faithful followers of the new religion. Humility, meekness, self-denial, charity, purity—those were the fair flowers of virtue, practically unknown to the civilization of the ancient world—which flourished in the hearts of those of the new faith, and spread their fragrant perfume all about.

This Christianity did; and this, thank God, it does now. Now, as then, in the midst of a civilization that daily seems to be going back to pagan standards of life, the Christian Catholic religion brings forth those same fair flowers and fruits, and spreads the fragrance of virtue and of holiness wherever it is found.

What is the secret of this? What was it that raised the daily life of the Christian, living in the midst of heathendom, to a height of virtue that astonished those who saw it for the first time; what is it that now, thank God, in the lives of Catholic priests and re-

ligious, and in the humble, devout lives of thousands of the faithful, rich and poor, high and low, produces virtue that strikes the modern world with astonishment whenever it is looked upon?

Brethren, it is not a mere philosophy of life; it is not a mere abstract principle, however lofty; it is *love*—passionate affection and love for a *Person*; for a living Person, who by what He is, draws irresistibly to Himself the hearts of all who look to Him; fills them with His spirit, makes His ideals their own, plants deep down in their hearts the desire to be like Him.

Jesus Christ is that Person: love for Jesus Christ is the secret of the virtues of His true followers.

You see, then, dearest brethren, what is the secret of the daily life of the true Christian and of its sanctification—it is the love of Jesus. Nothing will take its place. We may lay down rules, and principles; we may even accept and approve the sublime moral teaching of the Gospels; but we shall never get beyond a mere approval—we shall never carry out in our lives that sublime teaching, if we have not the love of Jesus in our hearts. The world with its allurements; the flesh with its strong passions; the devil with his craft, will surely draw us from the path of virtue if we love not Jesus Christ. Abstract principles will not do; we need an all-conquering motive in our wills if we are to brave the difficulties involved in leading a true Christian life; in overcoming our natural inclinations to evil, in fighting the constant battle with self that a Christian life means.

All the history of God's Church proves this. What else but the personal love of Jesus has been the strength of the martyrs in every age? What but the love of Jesus has raised the confessors and virgins of the Church to such heights of virtue; what else but the love of Jesus is the force that keeps our poor Catholic people pure and holy and undefiled, humble and contented and cheerful in the midst of a world that has nothing for them but poverty and contempt, and yet tempts them with gross pleasures or the chance of worldly betterment if they will but forsake their faith. What is it else but the love of Jesus that makes our rich ones strip themselves of their wealth—that sends noble ladies to live in our slums and devote their lives to God's poor? It is the love of Jesus, personal love for Him, affectionate attachment to Him as the real, present, living Lord that He is, which has done all this.

And, I repeat, dear brethren, no one will be able to live the

Christian life, no one will be able to sanctify his daily life if he love not Jesus Christ; if Jesus be not to him a living, present Friend and Teacher.

This, indeed, is the office of faith: to bring before us, and to keep before us Him whom, seeing not, we believe—piercing through the veil with the constant glance of the spiritual eye of faith. How great that faith has been in some we know; and from them we learn how great it may be in us, if we but cultivate that great gift of divine faith that God has given us in our baptism when first He made us members of the mystic body of His only begotten Son.

This type of the true Christian, by intense faith living in the very presence of the well beloved Lord and Master, is beautifully set before us in the office of the virgin-martyr St. Agnes, who at such a tender age shed her blood joyfully for her Divine Spouse. He was ever before her; more real to her than any of those about her; she was espoused in chaste espousals to her Divine Lover, to whom alone all the strong affection of her pure heart was given.

“Depart from me, O food of death,” she cries to the human lover who would seek her hand, “depart from me, for I am already promised to Another who loves me. He hath girded my hand and neck with precious gems, and hath set in my ears rings of peerless pearls; He hath pledged me with the ring of betrothal, and hath adorned me with priceless jewels. With Him alone I keep faith; to Him with all devotion I give myself; to Him am I espoused to whom the angels minister, whose loveliness the sun and moon admire.”

This is no picture of poetic fancy, dear brethren; it is sober fact. It is the wish of our dear Lord that all should love Him thus; with deepest, tenderest affection; with love stronger than death. Was it not for this He asked, when He revealed the secrets of His Sacred Heart to that other spouse of His, the blessed Margaret Mary? We must not be content to creep low upon the ground; to put Our Lord far away from us; we must not think of Him as far away; for in Him we live and move and are; and does He not come to us Himself, in the true reality of His flesh and blood, soul and divinity, to us Christians—Jesus Christ entire, His living Self, in the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?

Brethren, I have spoken at length upon this love of Jesus; for it is the very foundation of the Christian's daily life, and of its

sanctification. And say not, "I am a sinner; I am unworthy to love Our Lord like that." Only be sorry for your sins; or, I would rather say, look upon the face of Jesus your Saviour, and you *will* be, you *must* be sorry for your sins; and then He will press you in loving embraces to His breast, and, like the once sinful Magdalen, who became one of the favorites of Jesus, you will be forgiven all, because you have loved Him much.

And now, dear brethren, having laid down the foundation for the true sanctification of our daily lives, let us briefly go through certain elementary religious practises that will aid us in keeping close to Jesus, and having His blessed image ever before us. Remember always, that these practises are to lead you to that: they must be undertaken in the spirit of the saints; you must base them on the love of Jesus, and then they will react upon the love with which you begin and end them, and will be the means of fanning that flame of love within you into ardent charity.

On first waking in the morning, the Christian should at once turn his thoughts to God, who is "about our path and about our bed"; and to Jesus Christ, our divine lover, for whom and with whom we wish to pass the coming day. We should offer to Him all our thoughts and words and acts, to be done for His sole honor and glory. As we wash and dress, we may recall some scenes of His sacred Passion, suggested by the actions we are performing: thus we may think of His being clothed with the white robe of mockery and shame. Then we shall address ourselves to our morning prayers. Brethren, never miss those morning prayers. This day we shall have temptations: we shall have good works to perform. To overcome these temptations and to perform supernatural good works we need God's constant graces. He has them ready for us—waiting to be showered upon us—but He wishes us to ask for them. For the love of Jesus let us not miss them by leaving out our morning prayers.

Before we go forth to our daily occupations, we should pause a while, and call to mind what we are, what we are here for, what this day is given us to do with. We are Christians; we belong to the family of God; to the company of the saints; to the fellowship of Jesus, who loves us with all His heart. We are here to glorify Him, and by so doing, to save our immortal souls; and that is what this day is given to us for.

It is most good and useful also to look forward, and to anticipate

any occasion of temptation, and arm ourselves beforehand against it by a firm resolution; and also to resolve that day to combat our besetting sin. Then, as we go forth, let us go forth as soldiers of Jesus; ever watchful, ever ready, strong in His grace to do battle against our three great foes, the world, the devil, and the flesh. Ah, dear Christian soul, be not lulled to sleep by the fancy that a Christian's life can be anything but a warfare here below. You are a member of the Church Militant—you are in the fighting line of Christ's army: go forth, then, day by day, with this conviction. Then you will not be surprised, nor dismayed, when you meet trouble, and trial, and temptation; you will know that they are but the material from which your glorious crown of victory is made. Go forth, then, bravely, undauntedly, with Jesus by your side.

Then, in our work, and in our lawful recreation, we must try to keep God ever before us, and the image of our dear Lord always in sight. We must do this by what is called "recollection"—the remembrance of his presence. This habit may be formed by practise; by an aspiration to Him when the clock strikes, or when we change from one occupation to another. Oh, how happy are those souls who have made a sanctuary for Jesus in their hearts; and who can turn inward to commune with Him in secrecy!

And in our daily intercourse with others, we must ever carry out the second great commandment of the Christian law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." God first, and others for God's sake. "Oh, my God, teach me to love Thee: teach me to love others in and for Thee"—that should be our constant prayer and desire. And, carrying this into effect, we shall not only be giving pleasure to the loving heart of Jesus, but our Christian charity, poured out upon all around us, will be a very apostolate of love, and will as surely lead other souls to Christ as a magnet attracts the particles of iron into which it is plunged.

Then there is our daily work. Brethren, whatever it is, unless it is done well, honestly, faithfully, to the very best of our capacity, there is something wanting in our lives as Christians. Piety will not make up for the neglect of the duties of our state of life: indeed, piety that does not make us do those duties well, or, at least cause us to strive to do those duties better and better, is no true piety at all, but a hollow sham.

"If you are in an ecstasy," says a great Catholic mystic, "and a poor famished beggar comes to your gate, come out of your ecstasy

and get him some soup." And if you are inclined to stay too long in church when service is over, and your hard-working husband is waiting for his dinner, shut your prayer-book and put away your beads, and go home and prepare it for the love of Jesus Christ.

In general, my dear brethren, the Christian must possess the things of this world as if he possessed them not. They were all made to help us to heaven; and we must so use them that they *shall* help us and not hinder us. This is the Christian rule about all the things and all the affairs of our earthly life; and it is founded on the fact that truly the things of earth are only the shadow, and the things of heaven, our true home, where we shall begin our *real* life, are the substance.

If we are to sanctify our daily lives, we must by no means neglect pious reading. By pious reading I do not mean the cursory skirmishing of a pious book; nor the rapid perusal of that invaluable sort of literature because it suits our tastes. No: that will not produce real fruit. Take your book—the New Testament, or St. Francis of Sales' "Devout Life," or that most excellent treatise "The Spiritual Combat," or the "Imitation of Christ," and read carefully a paragraph, or a few verses. The great object in reading is that you should gather and grasp the ideas of the writer, inspired or otherwise. Having penetrated the meaning of the words you have read, turn the book over, and *think*. Apply to yourself what you have just read: ask, have I done this? what has this to do with my daily life? Your reading in this way will suggest acts of praise, or thanksgiving, or humility, or contrition, and so on. But always end such reading with a definite resolution as to some fault that has been revealed to you, or some virtue in which you recognize yourself to be wanting. To sum up, your spiritual reading should be *prayerful* reading. It would not be easy to exaggerate the benefit that we should derive from a quarter of an hour spent daily in that exercise. The thoughts that we select to follow up of those that will be suggested to us by this kind of reading should be the simple, straightforward and practical thoughts that bear on our life and conduct as Christians. The time of spiritual reading is not a time for abstract questions or study; it is a time when we strive to let the simple truths of the Gospel, those sublime eternal verities, sink so deeply into our hearts that they may profoundly influence our lives.

When the day is done, the true Christian will come to the feet

of Jesus, to thank Him for the blessings of the day, and to confess its faults. This involves the examination of our conscience about the doings of the day: about thoughts and words and deeds; about spiritual duties, and the duties of one's state of life. No one need be told how important this is: important for self-knowledge; important as a general preparation for confession; important as a means of obtaining forgiveness then and there for any sins that we have fallen into. If there be—God forbid there should be—but if there be mortal sin, that sin can be, nay *will* be, forgiven, if we are truly sorry for it, not because we fear hell, but because we love God and His goodness; because we love Jesus. If we have had the supreme misfortune of falling away from Him, we must quickly come back—as quickly as possible; asking His dear Mother to obtain for us the grace *at once* to make an act of true contrition. Who can dare to go to sleep in mortal sin?

“Give to repentance thy last conscious breath;
For more and more this mortal weakness grows
That pledges thee to take the form of death,
And sleep a while. What if in dreams the doors
Of life should shut, and thou return no more?”

And in our daily thoughts and prayers, dear brethren, we must not forget the saints of God who have fought the good fight and entered into rest; for they can powerfully aid us by their prayers; obtaining for us many graces and blessings which our unworthiness might cause God to withhold. Chiefly let us daily address ourselves to the most glorious and immaculate Virgin-Mother of God; to St. Joseph, her spouse, to our angel guardian and patron saints; and each day we should do well to honor also, and to invoke specially, the saint whose festival is that day being kept by holy Church. Thus we shall not stand alone, but shall associate ourselves, and feel ourselves associated with, the glorious company of God's elect; and this thought will give us very great moral support in all trials and difficulties, and will fill us with the glorious hope of one day reaching the goal that they have reached.

“This is the will of God; your sanctification.” This is the will of God, that, living every day as followers of the saints, as true lovers of Jesus Christ, we shall pass at length through the dark portals of death to the brightness that is beyond them, to receive the embraces of that dear Lord in whom, not seeing Him, we have yet believed; who for all eternity shall delight us with the radiant vision of His most gracious countenance.

XLIV. THE CHIEF GOOD WORKS: ALMS-DEEDS, FASTING, PRAYER

BY THE VERY REV. ALEX. MAC DONALD, D.D.

"Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning."—Joel ii, 12.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*Christian penance fruitful in good works. Denies self to give God His own. Alms-deeds, fasting, and prayer pre-eminent among good works.*

I. (a) *Alms, in wide sense, anything given to a poor person out of compassion; as a work of penance, something given to relieve the bodily needs of one's neighbor.* (b) *Obligation of; springs from precept of brotherly love; binds especially the rich; urgency and merit of, set forth by Tobias; confirmed by Our Lord.* (c) *Great motive for alms-giving; last judgment made to turn on it.*

II. (a) *Fasting, nature and fourfold division of. Precept of, in substance of divine origin. Fast, in the Old Testament and in the New. Lenten fast of apostolic origin.* (b) *Regulations of, yearly issued; exemptions from; binds for each day.* (c) *Fruits of; good for body and soul; corporally and spiritually a wholesome discipline.*

III. (a) *Prayer, a privilege, a duty, a necessity; no one having use of reason can be saved without it.* (b) *Two forms of, mental and vocal. Need of mental prayer; worldliness and sin traceable to neglect of. "Remember thy last end."* (c) *Prayer of petition. God gives on condition of our asking. Morning and evening prayer. A weapon of defense.* (d) *Prayer must be good to be effectual. Three reasons why we do not get what we ask—quia mali, quia mala, quia male. Fourfold quality of good prayer—humility, earnestness, confidence, perseverance.*

Conclusion.—*We must pray always, and faint not. Striking words of St. Alphonsus. Wondrous power of prayer exemplified on Calvary.*

Christian penance is not a barren virtue, it is fruitful in good works. It involves not merely a change of heart, but a change of life and conduct—an earnest, persevering effort to undo the evil done. And it looks not only to the future, but to the past; it is an expiation as well as a preventive. For sin, besides being an offense against God, does Him grievous wrong. It robs Him of the love and the service so justly His due, and justice requires that man should, as far as in him lies, make good the loss caused to God by sin. He does this when he denies himself and gives of his goods to God—of the goods of fortune by alms-deeds, of corporal goods by fasting, of mental or spiritual goods by prayer. Thus is sin plucked up by the roots, the justice of God satisfied, and treasures are laid

up in heaven. Alms-deeds, fasting, prayer, these three, therefore, hold a pre-eminence among good works, and are known as the three keys of the kingdom of heaven. Let us consider each in turn.

1. An alms, in the widest sense, is anything given to a needy person out of compassion. In this sense it comprises the spiritual as well as the corporal works of mercy, for man, being made up of soul and body, must have the needs of both soul and body supplied. But as a work of penance, of reparation for sin, an alms is a something given to relieve the bodily or temporal needs of one's neighbor; for "he who gives to the poor lends to the Lord." It is in this sense I wish to speak of alms-giving.

First of all, those who have of this world's goods more than enough to supply their own needs are bound to give alms from time to time, as occasion may call for. The obligation springs from the divine precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Hence St. John says: "He that hath the goods of this world, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?"

The precept of alms-giving is binding especially upon the wealthy, for to whom much is given of him much shall be required. But in the case of extreme need, it is binding upon all who have it in their power to relieve the need. The words of the elder Tobias to his son define very clearly both the urgency and the merit of alms-giving. "Give us," he says, "of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. According to thy ability, be merciful. If thou hast much, give abundantly; if little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little. Thus shalt thou store up for thyself a good reward against the day of thy need. For alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." The truth of these last words is strikingly confirmed by our Lord Himself, where He speaks of the last judgment. "For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to me. . . . Amen, I say to you inasmuch as you did it unto one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me" (Matt. xxv, 35-40).

How careful, then, ought we to be to discharge this duty of Christian charity toward our neighbor, seeing that upon it will turn the

judgment of the just Judge upon the last day! What so great a good can you buy with your money, asks a saint, as redemption from your sins? The money given in alms for God's sake delivers from sin, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.

2. To fast in general means to abstain. We may distinguish a fourfold fast, taking the word in its widest sense, *viz.*, spiritual, moral, natural or physical, and ecclesiastical. Spiritual fast is abstinence from sin, and is binding upon all men, at all times, and in all places. Moral fast is abstinence from excess in meat or drink, and is opposed to gluttony and drunkenness. Natural fast is entire abstinence from anything in the form of food or drink, and is enjoined upon those who receive Holy Communion. Ecclesiastical fast is abstinence from food and drink according to the rules of quantity and quality laid down by the Church. I shall speak briefly of its origin, the manner of its observance, and its fruits.

The precept of fasting is in substance of divine origin. It existed even before the fall of man, not as now to the end that men may satisfy for their sins, but to test man's obedience to God. Had our first parents kept the simple fast enjoined upon them in Eden, we should not have to keep the much harder fast imposed on us to-day. After the fall we find that God time and time again enjoined a fast upon men. "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping," are the words He spoke by the mouth of His prophet Joel. Moses fasted forty days in the mount with God, and Elias, in like manner, forty days, before he had the wondrous vision on Horeb. Daniel fasted; the Ninivites fasted at the preaching of Jonas.

But in the Old Testament fasting, though enjoined by God Himself, was not fixed as to the time and manner of its observance, nor was it a general precept as in the New Testament, but given for particular persons in special times and circumstances. In the New Testament, on the other hand, the precept is general, binding all persons upward of twenty-one years of age and less than sixty, unless they are lawfully excused, and that, too, on certain specified and yearly recurring periods, namely, Lent, Advent, the ember days, and certain vigils.

The Lenten fast is of Apostolic origin, according to the well known rule of St. Augustine, that any religious ordinance which has existed in the Church Universal at all times and in all places, and has not been instituted by a General Council, is to be traced to

the Apostles. Hence the Church to-day, as in all past ages, enjoins this fast upon the faithful, and that, too, with Apostolic authority, and under such solemn sanction as is implied in the words of Our Lord to the Apostles, "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me, and he who despises me despises Him that sent me."

I need not dwell at any length on the manner in which the fast is to be kept: this is set forth in the regulations yearly issued in each diocese. I will only say that the quantity of food allowed in the morning and at the evening repast is not to be gauged with mathematical exactness. Thus if one should find that one can not do with the customary allowance of about two ounces in the morning, one can take a little more. It should be borne in mind that, though one is exempted from the obligation of fasting because of hard labor or feeble health, one is exempted so long as such hard labor or feeble health continues, and no longer. In other words, though one should be unable to fast every day that fasting is enjoined, one is bound to fast the days that one is able. The fast binds for each day separately. And it binds on pain of grievous sin, unless one is lawfully excused from fasting or has been dispensed. And the reason that excuses one must be proportioned to the gravity of the obligation. A slight headache, for instance, would be no sufficient reason, for God will not accept a flimsy excuse.

But if the difficulty of fasting makes us dread it, the manifold benefits to be derived from it invite us to practise it. Fasting is good for the body as well as for the soul. At the beginning of Lent every year the Church prays in the Holy Mass that the fast which is ordained for the healing of body and soul may be religiously observed. The most eminent physicians regard fasting as wholesome in certain ailments, more particularly in the case of impaired digestion, for which there is no radical cure except fasting. But it is for the healing of the soul especially that the fast is ordered. Sooner or later, in any case, the body must die, but the soul is immortal. By fasting the anger of God is quickly appeased, as we see in the instance of the Ninivites. Fasting satisfies for past sins, quells the rebellion of the passions, lifts up the mind above things gross and carnal, and enables the athlete of Christ to win the prize of high calling. Let us not be such enemies to ourselves as to neglect the wholesome and invigorating discipline of fasting.

3. The third good work is prayer. It is a great and blessed privi-

lege that we can pray to God, though we seldom stop to think of this, and perhaps for this very reason fail to make use of the privilege as we ought. It is hard for the poor and lowly ones of this world to gain favors from the wealthy and the great; hard even to have access to them. For the most part they can only present their petitions through others, and if they themselves venture to present them, they run the risk of being turned away and even treated with contempt. But the lowliest of the low can at any moment of the day or night gain admittance to the audience chamber of the King of kings, and is sure to be made welcome. "Come to me," are His words of standing invitation, "all ye who labor and are heavy-laden and I will refresh you."

But prayer is more than a privilege, it is a duty; more even than a duty: it is a necessity. We must ask if we would receive, seek if we would find, knock if we would have the door of heaven opened to us. It is of faith that no one who has come to the use of reason can be saved without prayer. If you clip the wings off a bird it can not fly, it can not soar aloft into its own element and be happy in the companionship of its mates. So the soul of man can never mount upward without prayer, can never join the blessed company of the angels and the saints in the happy home above. What the air we breathe is to the life of the body, that prayer is to the life of the soul. And as we know a man is dead when he ceases to breathe the vital air, so we know that the soul of the man who lifts not his voice in prayer is dead within him.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by golden chains about the feet of God."

Prayer has been described as the communion of the soul with God, the lifting up of the mind and heart to God, or again, as the asking from God of what we stand in need of. The first is mental, the other vocal, prayer. Both forms of prayer are needful and should go hand in hand. Even the ordinary Christian, the ordinary layman or laywoman, needs mental prayer to lead a Christian life. I do not say that one need make a set meditation, or that one need have recourse to mental prayer every day. What I do say is that one must give some serious thought from time to time, and the

oftener the better, to the concerns of the other world if one wishes to save one's soul. "With desolation," says God by the mouth of His prophet, "is the whole earth made desolate because there is no one that thinketh in his heart." Why is it that men are so attached to the things of this world, why is it that they are so of the earth, earthy, but that they think so little and so seldom of the other world? Why is it that men are so greedy of the good things of this world, why is it that they give their days and their nights to the pursuit of its pleasures, its riches, or its honors, but that they think so seldom of their last end, and so little realize that in a few short years at the most they must quit forever those things on which they now set so much store? Death will come like a thief in the night and steal from them the life they love so dearly yet waste so foolishly. Why do men so often grieve the heart of God with their sins, but that they will not reflect on the awful consequences of sin, nor lift eyes of faith to the Great White Throne, the judgment seat of Christ above, where they must so soon appear to render an account? Why do so many souls go down into the hell of fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, but that they will not while they have time go down in thought and in imagination to that place of torments? Why do not more of those for whom the Saviour's blood flowed so freely on Calvary enter into the house eternal in the heavens, but that they do not while here life up their hearts to the things that are above, that they pause not in their feverish pursuit of the vanities of earth to dwell upon the joy and the happiness and the glory that can never fade? "Remember," says the Holy Ghost, "thy last end and thou shalt never sin." Death, judgment, hell, and heaven, and the Passion of our blessed Lord, these are points on which every Christian should dwell, and often dwell, and bring home to himself in a practical way, if he would live in the grace of God and walk in the narrow way that leads to life.

The prayer of the heart must go hand in hand with the prayer of the lips, else this is but an empty form of words. When I say the prayer of the lips, or vocal prayer, I mean especially the prayer of petition. It is of it Our Lord says, "If you ask the Father anything in my name He will give it you." All that we really need, all that is really good for us, we get from God on the condition of our asking for it. This is the one condition, and it is indispensable. Of course God knows our wants before we make them known. It is

not knowledge that He seeks, but obedience—our compliance with the condition that He has laid down. And surely it is the most natural thing in the world that we should ask for what we have not got. What more natural than for a beggar to beg? We are all of us beggars on the bounty of God, and our hearts are as arid soil without water unto Him.

Every Christian should begin and end the day with prayer. I do not say that it is a sin to miss morning or evening prayer once in a while, or even wilfully to omit it. But sin may come of it, because it is only by the grace of God that we can overcome temptation, and it is only to those who ask for it that His grace is given. Again, there is danger that such omission will grow into habitual, or almost habitual, neglect of prayer. Those who first settled in this country used to go to their work every morning with arms in their hands, for fear of falling in with wild beasts or Indians and being found without means of defense. Every day of our lives we are liable to attack from an enemy far more to be dreaded than wild beast or savage. Hence we should never go to our work in the morning without first having armed ourselves with prayer. And the prayer must be good, else it will prove a worthless weapon. Who would trust himself among thieves or robbers with a broken sword or a rusty old musket?

When, then, is prayer good? What is good prayer? We may gather the answer from the reasons laid down by one of the fathers, St. Augustine, I think, why God does not at times hear our prayers—*quia mali, quia mala, quia male petimus*, that is to say, because we are not such as we ought to be, or ask for what we ought not, or ask not as we ought. In the first place, the one who asks must himself be good if his prayer is to be good. He must be leading a good life, or at least be earnestly seeking the grace of God so as to lead a good life. "We know," says the blind man in the Gospel, "that sinners God does not hear," which is strictly true of sinners as such, that is, of those whose hearts are still bent upon evil. In the next place, what we ask for must be good, *i. e.*, helpful, not hurtful, to us. St. Theresa used to say that what we ask of the God of infinite majesty and goodness should be worth asking, and, after all, there is but one thing worth asking, for "but one thing is necessary." "Seek first," Our Lord tells us, "the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you," *i. e.*, given without the asking. Let us take Him at His word. Lastly,

we must ask in the right way, humbly, earnestly, trustingly, perseveringly. It is the humble prayer that pierces the clouds and reaches the mercy-seat, for "God repels the proud and grants His grace to the humble." We must ask, too, with great earnestness; we must put our heart in our prayer. With what tense earnestness does the beggar seek his dole! Spiritually, we are beggars all. And we must beg with unfaltering trust in the divine bounty. "For he who wavers," says St. James, "is like the wave of the sea; let not such a one think to get anything from God." But even the humble, earnest, trustful petitioner at the heavenly court will plead in vain if he plead not perseveringly. God often delays the answer to our prayer; He puts us off, to try us, perhaps, or for some other purpose, which is always wise, though it may be inscrutable. It is "the persevering prayer of the just man" that "availeth much."

Let us, then, make a right use of this great means of salvation. And let us not grudge the time that is given to prayer. We can never do anything well if we grudge the time and are in too much of a hurry. Let us pray always, and faint not. "He who prays," says St. Alphonsus, "is certainly saved; he who prays not is certainly damned. All the damned have been lost through not praying. Had they prayed they would not have been lost. And this is and will be their greatest torment in hell, to think how easily they might have been saved, just by asking God for His grace, but that now it is too late—the time for prayer is over." O the wondrous power of prayer, and the priceless boon it procures for us—nothing less than life eternal! The penitent thief on his cross did but beg of Him who was crucified by his side to be remembered when He came into His kingdom, and he got from those dying Lips the blessed assurance, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

XLV. THE UTILITY OF HOLINESS

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"By the blessing of the just the city shall be exalted, and by the mouth of the wicked it shall be overthrown."—Prov. xi, 11.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Man has duties in the temporal and in the spiritual order—both must be fulfilled. These two duties are not opposed, though often in apparent conflict. In the long run the temporal is advanced by sacrifices made for the spiritual. The two laws support each other—witness the Jewish commonwealth.

II. The world's view of the spiritual—God forgotten; His laws trampled on; wealth, power, pleasure put in His place; everything balanced by these standards. Politics, commerce, education, law guided by this false standard.

III. The world suffers from these false maxims. Religion and holiness a stimulus to labor—witness the industry of the monks. Religion, inspires benevolence—hospitals, asylums, etc. Moral restraint conducive to happiness and material improvement. The power of the prayer of the holy man. Its effect on a sinful world. Scriptural examples.

IV. What history teaches to-day.

I. Man has two works to do in life, as he has two parts in his being—soul and body, and two lives—the present and the eternal. His spiritual work is by far the more important, but neither may be neglected. Each he must do with all his strength, and he must not allow his ardor for one to make him forget the other.

We have temporal and we have spiritual duties. On the one side we have to earn our living, to gain knowledge, to develop this world, to improve the material condition of our brethren, to alleviate the physical sufferings which God permits for our exercise. On the other hand we have to worship and love God, to imitate the virtues of Jesus Christ, to cultivate our souls to holiness, to promote God's interests with others, to lay up treasures for the next life, and to make our salvation sure. And to this work we must devote much of our substance, our time, and our labor.

These two classes of duty are very different, but they are not opposed. God has appointed each for us, and, when they are rightly understood, they are never incompatible. It may even be said that our real temporal interests are never opposed by our spiritual interests. There is often an apparent conflict, and the one

must be subordinated to the other. But what it really amounts to is this; that the spiritual duty opposes, not the temporal duty, but some undue excess in our temporal work. Under the present circumstances of life, our duty toward God will often necessitate some present loss or the endurance of some wrong. Viewing the thing narrowly, as to its immediate results, we may think that our spiritual duties are in such cases destructive of worldly interests. But the case is the same as flinging overboard a part of the cargo in a storm to secure the safety of the rest. View the matter broadly, look to a remoter future, and we shall recognize that it is better, even in a temporal sense, that men should be exercised by trials of the metal that is in them; and we shall see that in the long run the temporal advantage of the world is forwarded by sacrifice made in a noble cause.

Further than this, our temporal and our spiritual duties are closely connected, and give support each to the other. The spiritual law places our earthly duties very high in the scale; and in return, our worldly duties demand the observance of the spiritual ones; because, for their due performance and success, they require the blessing and aid of God. Hence, the man who is truly holy will be the most useful citizen of the state, and will contribute largely to its well-being. Other men also will be better, and happier, and more useful, therefore, by reason of his presence and influence. The faithful observance of the spiritual law is absolutely necessary for good order and success both in private and in public life. That law, given by God, is adapted to man's being, it is intended to perfect his character, it will, if observed, make him fitter for all the other duties of life, and it will effectually remedy these numerous and terrible evils which have blighted the highest endeavors of men.

We have an example for our guidance in sacred history. The Jewish commonwealth in its early days was ruled by God Himself through certain chosen men. The civil law was then, as it should always be, in accord with the spiritual and religious law. Like the religious law, the civil law was a revelation of God. Each supplemented the other; they formed one code; the law of the land was the law of God. Duty to the state was grounded on spiritual motives. An offense against God was also a crime against society. A man could not separate the two classes of duty, and set himself up as an enlightened and faithful citizen, while he was a transgressor of the moral law or a blasphemer against the Lord. Re-

ligion alone could inculcate the high principle that was required for filling secular offices. Holiness of life was the quality most necessary and useful in a ruler of the state.

II. These are not the ideas that prevail generally in the world, and that guide the lives of most men. To a very great extent the existence of God is forgotten. His laws are quietly set aside or unscrupulously broken, the most important side of man's dual nature is ignored, his spiritual cultivation is totally neglected, eternal happiness in the presence of God is not thought to be worth striving for, and men hurry on, as fast as they can, to the unspeakable torments of hell. In the meantime they are engaged in their buying and selling, in making money or spending it, in deceit and injustice, in gaining power and misusing it, in dishonoring themselves, injuring their neighbors, outraging God. The gods of the world are wealth, and power, and pleasure. It seeks nothing else. On these it expends all its faculties. The greatest happiness and dignity of men is to possess them. Everything else in earth or heaven is, therefore, subordinated to these three things.

The world has thus its standard of excellence by which it judges all things; and when the spiritual life, and holiness, and the future reward, are offered to its consideration, it applies its test to them. Men ask, Does it pay? Is it a safe investment for money? Will it make life longer? Will it increase enjoyment? Will it add to our stores of knowledge? The obvious answer on a first glance is, that the life of the spirit will not do these things. It does not interest itself about them. On the contrary, it opposes the too eager pursuit of wealth, it urges men to be moderate in amassing and using it, or sometimes to sell what they have and give it to the poor. It bids us seek the advantage of others as if it were our own, give away without return, spend on purposes that yield no percentage of interest, and look for our profit in another world. The qualities recommended to us for imitation are obedience, self-denial, faith in the unseen, generosity, absorption in the love of God. These are not the qualities for making one's way in the world. On the contrary they seem to reverse all temporal duties, as the world considers them, and to destroy all temporal prospects. It is to no purpose that Our Lord gives an assurance that all these temporal things "shall be added" to us if we observe rigidly the spiritual law. This is folly, according to the notions of the world, it is contrary to all experience; and few are they who have enough con-

fidence in Our Saviour's promise to run the risk of loss in obeying this command.

As a consequence of these principles, we often hear views about holiness of life that are astonishing and shocking to us as Catholics; views contrary to the express words of Christ, and proved to be false by the daily facts and the past history of Christianity. Thus there are some who venture to say that the ideal of life, as depicted for us by Our Lord in the Gospels, is utopian, beautiful, but impossible. They think that the Christian law of morality is simply impracticable in human society. They speak of poverty, chastity, and obedience, those great columns of the religious life, as the extinct virtues. They would perhaps consider any serious attempt to imitate the life of Jesus Christ to be evidence of madness.

The world carries on its life without any regard to the inward life of man and the duties belonging to it. It will brook no interference or guidance from its Creator. It is resolved to go its own way, and wishes the Almighty to go His way and leave it alone. The time is past when men were ruled by God; that was in the infancy of the world; men now are wiser and stronger, as they think, and are able to manage their own affairs for themselves. They are guided by present advantage or passion, and not by any idea of pleasing God and carrying out His wishes. In politics and commerce, in public law, and dealings between nation and nation, no account is made of religion, and very little of the moral law. In education, too, the tendency is to leave one-half of human nature untrained. Some countries have eliminated every trace of religion from their schools; others no doubt will, when they can, withdraw the concessions which they have had to make to such religious feeling as still remains active. What is now wanted is to qualify children for the life of the body, the life of this world alone; to give them a certain amount of the most practical knowledge, and a few scraps of conventional decorum to cover their moral nakedness. As for training them to the knowledge of God, spiritual perfection, and eternal blessedness, that would be considered as a wasting of money on useless fancies.

There are many fanatics who go further still, and consider that the cultivation of the spiritual faculties is injurious to human welfare; and they are goaded to madness at the mere sight of virtue. In their eyes, humility, patience, and forgiveness, are disgraceful weakness; faith, and obedience, and respect, are vices of slaves;

chastity and beneficence are crimes; religion is the enemy of society. These men are not few, and their insanity is far from being contemptible. They are nurtured by the secret societies in ever increasing numbers, they have risen to power in various lands, and there they have robbed and exiled, calumniated and persecuted men and women, whose only offense was that they served God in holiness and truth.

III. Nothing could be more false and more prejudicial to the world's best interests than these views which are held concerning the spiritual life. Any views that do not take account of the facts of human nature must have a calamitous effect when they are brought into action. And here we find one of the chief facts of human nature left out of consideration in all the arrangements for human life; the fact, that is, of the existence of an immortal soul, and of its future eternal life, with the duties that arise thence. Through the operation of these views millions of human souls miss the aim of their existence and are plunged into eternal misery. But we may consider the spiritual life of the soul and its holiness from the world's point of view, that is, as regards its temporal utility. It is a low point of view, and it ought not to be a motive with us for leading a holy life; to do this would be making the greater serve the less, it would be reversing the proper order of things. But as the enemies of holiness and religion have made a charge against these things, it is lawful for us to show the contrary. When, therefore, men scoff at holiness and say that it is a mere excuse for laziness, when they say that it has no practical utility in the world, that it locks up human capacities from profitable work, retards progress, and interferes with our worldly duties in the family and in public life, we may well point out that, although holiness looks first to God and the future life, it is most profitable also in a worldly sense.

Who is the most useful man in the estimation of the world? The man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before; the man whose inventiveness devises new uses for materials, increases production, provides more employment, gets work done more rapidly and more cheaply, discovers new outlets for capital. He is useful indeed. Yet his usefulness is only material; it does not touch the happiness, the real comfort of men. It does not diminish the sum of misery in the world; it enriches a few inordinately, but it only makes the struggle for life more intense and more difficult.

1. Now religion and holiness are most profitable as a stimulus to labor, and so to the production of wealth. Those who are spiritual are not so narrow-minded as men of the world; they do not exclude from cultivation that side of human nature which they consider the less important; they are not intolerant of it; on the contrary, they regard earthly labor as a divine ordinance to be observed as thoroughly as the ordinance for sanctifying their souls. Their motto is *laborare et orare*, labor and pray. These are placed almost on the same level; at any rate they are inseparable. Even those who aspired to the greatest perfection and separated themselves from the world, did not exempt themselves from doing duty to society. In their seclusion they alternated meditation with useful manual labor. None have been more faithful laborers than the members of religious orders, "the lazy monks," as they are so often called. Among them were no strikes, no demands for higher pay, no squandering of their earnings on self-indulgence, no neglect of work for excessive recreation and holidays, no looking forward to retiring from their laborious lot. They were the pioneers of industry in the Old World.

2. Another utility of religion consists in the works of benevolence which it has inspired. Look at the hospitals, the asylums, the schools, the associations for aiding prisoners, restoring the fallen, saving foundlings, visiting the poor, nursing the sick. There is hardly a single one, out of tens of thousands of institutions for the relief of human wants, that has not originated in the mind of some holy man or woman. If religion and all its material good works were to perish to-morrow off the face of the earth, how few of such institutions would remain, and how much the great mass of unrelieved misery would increase!

Under the same head we may place the comfort, the encouragement, the restraint, the contentment, the guidance, which religion and the influence of saintly persons diffuses in the world. Surely this conduces more to human happiness, and indeed to material well-being than any mechanical invention. These are services which can not be estimated in money, which are not investments, and do not figure in statistics of a country's wealth. Yet can any one say that the prosperity of a country is not increased by the daily millions of such intangible services rendered by holy lives to the commonwealth?

3. There is another utility in holy lives less visible than the fore-

going but not less important; this would vindicate their character as benefactors of the working world even if they did nothing else. In the midst of the throng of sinful men whose deeds are forever calling down the vengeance of God, there are numerous unpresuming unnoticed ones, whose holiness and whose prayers hold back the punishments that are ready to descend, and bring down a blessing on human labors. Terrible were the penalties of old inflicted on sin—the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the extermination of the nations of Palestine, the captivities and final dispersion of the Jews. We look at the awful abominations of the great cities of the civilized world, and we wonder that the earth does not open and swallow them up. Is God indifferent? Has He grown used to the sight of sin? No. But the prayers of the saints on earth, and the unceasing oblations on the altars of the Church, are saving the world from the chastisement it deserves.

We have sufficient instances of the power of holiness to avert the punishment of sinners in the sacred Scriptures. When God was about to send fire from heaven to destroy the cities of the plain, Abraham interceded for them, and the Lord answered that if ten good men were to be found there, He would spare all the sinners for their sake. Another time God said of Jerusalem: "I will protect this city and will save it for my own sake, and for David my servant's sake (IV Kings, xix, 34). Again God showed the power of the prayer of one holy man when the Israelites set up and adored the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, while Moses was receiving the law. God said: "Let me alone, that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them." "But Moses besought the Lord . . . and the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against his people" (Exod. xxxii, 10, 11, 14). In similar terms God spoke to the prophet: "Therefore do not thou pray for this people, nor take to thee praise and supplication for them; and do not withstand me" (Jerem. vii, 16). Sodom was not the only city where the holiness of a few would have averted the punishment of the many; God said to Jeremias: "Go about through the streets of Jerusalem, and see, and consider, and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man that executeth judgment, and seeketh faith: and I will be merciful unto it" (Jerem. v, 1). And to Ezechiel: "I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge, and stand in the gap before me in favor of the land, that I might not destroy it; and I found none" (Ezech.,

xxii, 30). Here is precisely the work of holy souls in the Church of this day. Reparation for the sins, and blasphemies, and irreligion of the world is one of the chief purposes of their prayers. We get the same teaching from the early fathers. St. Ambrose says: "Destruction has come upon the state only on account of the sins of its citizens. Cease to sin and our country will revive." And another father says: "Who can doubt that the world is preserved by the prayers of the saints?"

We learn further in the Scriptures that the presence of the saints is a source of blessing to others. Jacob testifies to Laban: "Thou hadst but little before I came to thee, and now thou art become rich, and the Lord hath blessed thee at my coming" (Gen. xxx, 30). In like manner, "The Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, and multiplied all his substance both at home and in the fields" (Gen. xxxix, 5). And later on, the whole land of Egypt prospered under his rule, and passed safely through the seven years of famine.

IV. We have no reason to doubt that the ways of Divine Providence are still the same, and that the presence of holy men brings a blessing and averts evils, and that they are more profitable to their country by their virtue, than they would be by military, or political, or commercial services. When the Israelites were in battle with the Amalekites, it was less their valor than the prayer and outstretched arms of Moses on the mount which won them the victory. Occasionally it has been made known that God has saved some city from a besieging army, or has warded off a pestilence, because of the merits of some one of His fervent servants; but in general it is impossible to trace the exact power of holiness. We may learn something, however, by observing the different results at the present day according as countries are governed by irreligious or religious men. Under infidel rulers who harrass religion, a country goes backward, its finances fall into disorder, its improvements do not bear fruit, corruption becomes rife, a feeling of insecurity and apprehension affects the whole country, everything seems to be out of gear. Though the soil be rich and the constitution just and liberal, all sorts of evils break out most unaccountably. And when it happens that some change transfers the government to Christian hands, it is equally remarkable how tranquillity and confidence revive, and even the financial prospects improve. We need not go far to see how the text is verified. "By the blessing of the just the

city shall be exalted, and by the mouth of the wicked it shall be overthrown" (Prov. xi, 11). And again: "Corrupt men bring a city to ruin, but wise men turn away wrath" (Prov. xxix, 8).

We may learn from these considerations a new esteem for holiness of life. We may learn that a life of prayer and humble duties is a power in the world. We need never complain of our obscure lives and limited opportunity of doing good. Every one has the power of doing a work in accordance with his desires, and greater than his natural strength, by means of a holy life and fervent prayer. We may learn that holy men are a bulwark of the state and a source of divine blessing to it, and that an inheritance of virtue and devotion is better for one's children than great stores of wealth. These are often a doubtful good, and a source of sin and trouble; but the blessing of God, to those who inherit it, is a source of peace and worldly prosperity, as well as of eternal salvation.

XLVI. THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

BY THE REV. DR. C. P. BRUEHL

"Blessed is the man that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor; in the day of evil the Lord will deliver him."—Ps. xl, 1.

SYNOPSIS.—A picture of the misery of the world as an appeal to natural benevolence. The mission of Christian mercy in God's plan and the economy of salvation.

I. How we can help our fellowmen. Importance of the corporal works of mercy; they meet all the wants of suffering humanity. Detailed description. Plea for the needy, based on the greatness of their sufferings and their helplessness.

II. The motives of Christian mercy. The corporal works the test of charity. (a) We are one great family, and should fraternally help one another. (b) Christ identifies Himself with the poor. Reverence for the beggar. Philanthropy and Christian charity. Sisters of Charity; kings and queens serving the poor. (c) Kind deeds a source of joy. (d) Mercy, a means of obtaining remission of sins and a merciful judgment. Blessed the hands that perform works of mercy.

My friends, there is much misery in this world of God. If the aggregate of human distress of only one fairly large city were flashed on our sight, it would be an overwhelming, heart-sickening vision. There is old age fretting under its weary load of lonesome days and sleepless nights; there is pinching want preying on children and women as a hungry wolf; there is a hopeless poverty clouding the brains of men and driving them to despair and crime; there is a sordid indigence degrading man and blotting out his finer and nobler qualities, leaving nothing in him but the wild raging desire for food and drink. And then the hospital with its groaning sick and friendless dying; the ambulance hurrying through our busy streets with its horrible freight of mangled or infected humanity; the orphan asylum with its little ones that never knew the love of a father and never felt the warm kiss of a mother; the slums with the houseless, the unsheltered, the down trodden, the submerged; the prison looming dark and gloomy with its barred cells and bolted doors; the nameless graves in some neglected corner of the cemetery—these are the hideous spots on the fair brow of a boasting city. And this may be within the sweep of our eye; yea, perhaps, next door to our own comfortable home. The shoulders

of our fellowmen are heavily laden and their footsteps often falter under the pressing weight of affliction; and imploringly they cast their eyes around for some one to lighten their burden. The tottering and fallen stretch out their hands for some one to uplift them. The heartbroken, the stricken ones, the tearful, the suffering, the needy sigh for one to relieve their distress, to dry their tears and to brighten their days.

Will we remain indifferent, insensible to the woes and hardships of our fellowmen? Will we harden our hearts against their pitiful entreaties?

"Blessed is the man, that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor." Blessed he that understandeth the designs of God with regard to the suffering, the wretched and the helpless. Blessed he that does not shut his ears against the humble supplications of the miserable; whose hand is extended to help and give and uplift. For he does the work of God, the work of mercy; he is heaven's own minister, sent on glorious errands of charity.

Such was the plan of God; that mercy should relieve misery, that the prosperous should assist the poor, that the strong should support the weak, that the affluent should share his wealth with the needy, that man should help his fellowmen. God sends His messengers to the abodes of poverty, to the bedside of the suffering, to the dismal cells of the condemned. But these ministers of God, bringing relief and help and gladness, are not the winged angels of heaven, but merciful men and women with compassionate hearts and generous souls, possessing the goods of the earth and strong in health and liberty. And you, my dear friends, you also are to be ministers of mercy, angels of compassion, helpmates of God in assisting the poor and diseased. God has not forsaken the destitute; He will help them by the agency of their fellowmen. And every individual must co-operate in this great work of relief. God has imposed on every one a task of mercy, a mission of charity and its fulfilment is the condition of our salvation. This is the economy of God. This is the meaning of misery in the household of God. There are no stepping stones leading to heaven but the works of mercy. Blessed the man that understands the plans of God and carries them out. "Blessed the man that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor." Blessed are you, my friends, if you realize the importance of the works of mercy and if by performing deeds of charity you gain the kingdom of heaven.

We will, therefore, try to study how we can help our fellowmen, what we can do for our suffering brothers and sisters, how we can diminish human misery. We will endeavor to imbue ourselves with the spirit of Our Lord, by contemplating the rewards promised to the merciful. May Our Lord inspire us with lasting and efficacious sentiments of mercy, may He kindle in our hearts true Christian charity toward all that are afflicted.

I. Our Lord Himself sums up the different ways in which we may relieve the bodily needs of our neighbor, thus showing how great an importance He attaches to these works of mercy. "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me" (Matth. xxv, 35, 36). To these we may add as an extension of the care of the sick the providing for a decent burial of the deceased. In these seven works of mercy the manifold wants and necessities of our corporal existence are embraced. For this is what man needs: food, drink, a covering for his nakedness, shelter, a hand to nurse him in his illness, defense in his captivity and finally a grave. Where these are wanting they may be supplied by the charity of our neighbor and thus afford an occasion for the exercise of mercy. Let us repeat these seven corporal works of mercy to impress them on our memory and review them in detail. The Catechism enumerates them as follows: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbor the stranger, to visit the sick, to ransom the captives, to bury the dead.

Have you, my friends, ever experienced the pangs of hunger and the fever of thirst? No, God has dealt out to you and your dear ones your daily dole of bread and refreshed your lips. But there are men, women—and alas—little children familiar with famine and the racking pains of starvation. The torments of hunger and thirst are the fiercest we can imagine; they rage like fire in the bowels and molten lead on the lips. Let not your brother suffer any longer the terrible agony of hunger and thirst; let him not perish for want of food and drink. Can you feast on exquisite morsels, while he is crazed with hunger? Go forth and seek the poor in whose famished looks and emaciated faces you read a long story of untold sufferings; put an end to their torture, give them out of thy abundance or break with them thy own bread. A heart of marble would be touched by the pleading, agonized look of

starvation. Here there is need of immediate help; for nothing clamors louder for speedy relief than hunger and thirst. You will find many an opportunity to practise these first two works of mercy. For the need of food and drink is universal; and there is more famine and starvation in the world than we dream of. Turn not the beggar away from your threshold. Perhaps you have noticed in your neighborhood some poor children with big, frightened eyes, flattening their little noses against the show windows of a bakery shop or greedily looking on their more fortunate playmates enjoying their lunch! Ah, my friend, these children are victims of hunger. Be merciful; feed Christ's little ones. There are, if not in your neighborhood, surely in your village or town, starving men, starving widows, starving orphans, starving families. Go, and feed the hungry!

Only second to the pains of hunger, are the sufferings resulting from exposure. Clothing serves a two-fold purpose; it protects the body against the inclemency of the weather and shields the sense of shame and the delicate sentiment of modesty. Physical torture of a high degree may be caused by frostbitten limbs or the fiery darts of the sun. And mental confusion, as smarting as bodily pain, may be produced by the lack of a decent covering. Have pity on your naked brother and your scantily clad sister! Behold their rags! Cover the shivering flesh, livid from the cold and benumbed by exposure! Clothe the nude, that they may appear before men without confusion; spare their modesty, that it may not be dulled or cruelly offended. Many an occasion will present itself where you may supply proper apparel to the poor. Forget them not on Christmas day. Some children have not becoming dress for their First Holy Communion. Clothe them for this great ceremony, that they may approach the altar with external decency. Do not sell your old clothes, as long as they are fit to wear. Give them to some poor family, to an orphan asylum or to some benevolent institution. If you sell them, they will only bring a few cents; if you give them to the poor, they will earn an eternal reward. The highest price you will receive for old clothes when you give them to the needy. Kings have given their royal robes to the naked, thinking them none too good to warm their chilled limbs. St. Elizabeth covered a beggar with her queenly mantle, made of the costliest fabrics. Princely hands have plied the needle to sew garments for the destitute! Follow their example!

A sad lot is that of the poor street-arab, who has no house nor tent; a stone sometimes is his pillow, where he rests his weary head. Have you seen the leaking roof, the shattered walls and the broken windows of the dwelling of many a poor family? Have you ever heard of the terrible overcrowding of the tenement houses, the hot-beds of filth, contagion and moral corruption? It may be that some poor family is evicted this moment in the same street where your stately mansion rises, because the rent was overdue on account of a prolonged sickness of the father! Is this not an opportunity to harbor the stranger? There are more homeless and houseless strangers in a big city than in the deserts and wild places of Africa. Moreover, the homes for the orphans, the aged and the poor should form a steady item in your budget of charity.

The prisoner also has a claim to our mercy. Not that we should help him to elude well-merited and just punishment. But we may alleviate the horrors and soften the gloom of his detention. We should help him to become a better man and especially assist him in finding useful employment after his release. Let us remember that Our Lord was a prisoner, though innocent and free from guilt. Through Him even the prison is sacred ground and a field for the exercise of mercy. Charity and pity and humane treatment for the poor prisoner, though he be guilty of many crimes! And especially forgetfulness of his misdeeds when the gates of the prison have given him back to society. May he then again enjoy the name of an honest citizen and may no one cast a stinging slur on his past life. We will help him to enter the paths of honesty and protect him against a shameful relapse.

Who is more helpless than the sick? Who deserves our pity more and who has a greater title to our mercy than they? The sickbed is the synthesis of all human sufferings. Its dark shadow falls on every life. The sick are unable to help themselves; they are dependent on the mercy of their fellowmen. Not even a drop of water can they procure themselves, when their lips are parched with the fiery thirst of fever. Their feet refuse them service, their hands are weak and trembling! The utter helplessness, pitiful condition, the never ceasing pain of the sick cry aloud for mercy. God has thrown the sick on our mercy and He will demand a severe account of the treatment we have given them. Let us visit the sick, not to annoy them by idle talk and fruitless curiosity, but to assist them when the hand of God is upon them. We may brighten the

weary hours of their long days and interminable nights; we may smooth the pillow on which the aching head reposes; we may cool the burning brow and moisten their cracking lips; we may provide for medical treatment and bring relief in many ways. Charity will suggest many little services we can render our suffering neighbor. But let us not expect profuse thanksgivings for our kindness from the sick; let us bear their impatience and ill humor, their vehement pains often make them peevish and fretful. Forget not, my friends, the lonesome, the bedridden, the neglected, the helpless sick!

The last service we can bestow on our brother, is to honor his earthly remains. The departed soul loves that body, which is now cold and rigid, and longs for the reunion with it. If we have assisted our neighbor during his life, let our charity not shrink from his lifeless form. Let us twine around his folded hands the rosary of our Lady; let us cover him with the solemn drapery of the shroud; let us accompany him to his last resting place. This will honor the memory of the deceased and comfort the afflicted relatives. Visit the lonely grave; do not permit the little mound to be beaten down or the tombstone to decay; there is such a reproachful pathos in a neglected, forgotten tomb, over which the weeds have grown and where never a prayer is whispered.

The mere sight of the misery of mankind is sufficient to arouse our pity and to prompt spontaneous deeds of kindness. But that the fountains of mercy may well up more abundantly in our heart and may never fail, we will consider the higher motives for the practise of mercy; the eternal, powerful motives, derived from our holy faith.

II. We are one great family. God is our Father. We are his children. They that suffer, they that want, are our brothers and sisters. Do we not remember the words of Our Lord: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another as I have loved you" (St. John xiii, 34). But is that love, that will turn a deaf ear to the plaintive petitions of his brother? "And if a brother or sister be naked, and want daily food; and one of you say to them: go in peace, be you warmed and fed; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body; what shall it profit" (St. James ii, 15). "My little children," said St. John, "let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth." The corporal works of mercy are the touchstone of genuine Chris-

tian charity. Man's bodily wants impress themselves more forcibly on our attention, they excite our sympathy more easily and stand forth in bolder relief. He who has no feeling for the corporal needs of his fellowmen, has no feeling for them at all. Men suspect a purely spiritual charity that neglects their crying bodily wants. The corporal works of mercy attest themselves and are above cavil and prejudice. They shine with a splendor as that of the sun and triumphantly conquer the hearts of men. Our Lord did not disdain to minister to the temporal wants of His hearers. He who helps not his neighbor, is an unworthy member of the family of God. He who will not consider his suffering neighbor as his brother, can not have God for a father.

What exalts Christian charity above natural benevolence and philanthropy is the fact that the Christian recognizes in the poor and needy the very person of Our Lord. Christ identifies Himself with the poor: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (Matth. xxv, 40). This is, indeed, a startling statement. But we must literally accept it. When St. Martin had given his cloak to a wretched beggar, Our Lord appeared to him in the following night. Christ wore the cloak of St. Martin and showing it to the angels that surrounded Him He said: "This is the cloak which Martin gave me." A similar incident is related in the life of St. Elizabeth. This holy princess one day placed a leprous beggar in the bed of her husband, there being no other bed available at the time. Vexed at the seemingly extravagant hospitality of his wife her husband hurried to his room and removed the covering of his bed. But there he saw the bruised figure of Our Saviour. Touched by this miracle he praised his wife and said: "To such a guest I am always willing to surrender my couch." For the eye of faith the poor wear the features of Our Lord. Hence the great reverence with which the saints treated the miserables; they kissed their feet, as Mary kissed the feet of Our Lord. They did not look down upon the poor, but touched them with a reverential hand. They ministered to their needs, not as conferring a favor, but as humbly serving them. The Church sends its best and noblest daughters, its unspotted virgins, the spouses of a King, to the bedside of the sick and into the wretched abodes of the poor. Christian charity is not overbearing or offending; it is full of reverence and tenderness. It delights in performing the meanest functions for the poor. Yea, it is, indeed, a great thing to serve the

King, to serve Our Lord. Despise not the beggar that knocks at your door. Look at Him with the eye of faith. Then you will see a glory on his brow, which is the reflection of Christ's majesty. Remember, my dear friends, it is Christ that suffers hunger and nakedness and poverty; it is the son of the King that is clothed in rags and begs his bread. Be not deaf to the voice of Christ, re-echoing in the pleading accents of the beggar's prayer!

A good deed is its own reward. We are never happier than when we have helped our neighbor. Kindness is an unfailing source of the purest joys.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

Let us sow many good deeds and we will reap a harvest of joy. Mercy brings down upon us temporal blessings. Alms make rich. "He that giveth to the poor shall not want" (Prov. x, 12). Alms-giving has never impoverished any one; for the Lord will repay His debtor in due time. But the bread that is withheld from the poor will never profit the heartless owner. The wealth of the rich that oppress the needy will dwindle, as the snow before the sun. "Your riches are corrupted; and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire" (James v. 2). The heart of the merciless is like the burned-out crater of an inactive volcano: dark, barren, full of muddy waters and foul vermin. In the days of need, no one will help him. "He that stoppeth his ear against the cry of the poor, shall also cry himself and shall not be heard" (Prov. xxi, 13).

Before God we are all debtors and sinners. If God were exacting and dealt with us in strict justice, not one of us would escape. His wrath would devour us like fire. Our only salvation, our only hope, is the mercy of God. Our sins are before us day and night, glaring and red, crying to heaven and clamoring for vengeance. Who will blot out the sad record of our many failings? Who will propitiate the just anger of our offended God? There is but one answer. Deeds of mercy will cancel our sins. Show mercy and mercy will be shown to you. "For charity covereth a multitude of sins" (I Peter iv, 8). "For alms deliver from all sin and death and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness" (Tob. iv, 11). "Redeem

thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor" (Dan. iv, 24). Wonderful power of the works of mercy! they make God forget your sins; they make Him smile and forgive, where He should frown and punish. And the keynote of the last judgment is mercy! "Judgment without mercy to him that had not done mercy" (Jas. ii, 13). Do you expect a favorable judgment; do you wish to find a lenient, merciful Judge? Do works of mercy. Let the poor plead your cause; they are the Judge's friends. Our hopes of a merciful sentence are bound up with the poor. The needy, if you have befriended them on earth, will fling open to you the gates of heaven. Your sins will be balanced by your deeds of mercy. The gold you have given to the poor will redeem your soul. Gold opens all doors; it opens the gates of heaven when placed in the hands of the poor. The merciful die with great confidence. They have many friends in the next world; aye, the Judge is their friend; for He was hungry and they gave Him to eat; He was naked, and they covered Him; He was sick and they visited Him. So He will say to them: "Come, ye blessed of my father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matth. xxv, 34).

My dear friends, God has given us two hands. May they be instruments to help our fellowmen and to practise the works of mercy. How perfectly they are adapted to this task! How easily can we extend them to wipe a tear, to bestow alms, to rescue a fallen brother and to afford help in all circumstances. If they have been idle or busy in doing wrong, may they now be consecrated to the service of the needy and the poor. Let us not amass the dust of earthly wealth, but let us lay up treasures in heaven by performing deeds of mercy. How powerful are merciful hands when raised in prayer! How readily the gates of heaven yield to the touch of hands that have been ever active and indefatigable in works of mercy! Amen.

XLVII. THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY—TEACHING THE CATECHISM

BY THE REV. J. A. M. GILLIS, A.M.

"Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."—Matt. v, 7.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The excellence of mercy. In God—the greatest of virtues. In man—charity excels it, in his relation to God; but mercy is the greatest virtue in man, in relation to his fellow creatures. The Psalmist extols mercy.*

II. *The spiritual works of mercy are more excellent than the corporal works in view of their ultimate end. The different ways of exercising the spiritual works of mercy.*

III. *Each considered: (1) To instruct the ignorant. (2) To counsel the doubtful. (3) To admonish the sinner. (4) To bear wrongs patiently. (5) To forgive wrongs willingly. (6) To console the afflicted. (7) To pray for the living and the dead.*

Conclusion.—*To instruct the ignorant specially considered; the excellence of this virtue; and the necessity of religious instruction to all. (a) Necessity of means. (b) Necessity of precept. Reward, in the words of the Prophet Daniel.*

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Mercy is the first attribute of God. It is the most divine-like, the greatest of all the virtues. Charity beautifies the soul and elevates her to the throne of God. It is the blessed union of the soul with her Creator—her highest beatitude. In this relation it is the most excellent virtue in the creature. But mercy is the characteristic virtue of God. In this virtue He takes special complacency. It is the one in which His omnipotence is most beautifully manifested. Hence, in the words of the Psalmist, He delights in showing His mercy over all His admirable works. "The Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. cxliv, 9).

Indeed, the Psalmist seems to find his theme in eulogizing the multitude of the mercies of the Lord. No phraseology at his control seems to be adequate to extol this attribute of God, which soars higher than the lofty vault of heaven and endures through the vista of eternity. Inasmuch, then, as the perfection of man consists in becoming like his Creator, to whose divine image he is made, the exercise of mercy toward his fellow creatures is the noblest and

highest of virtues; for as mercy is the first attribute of God, it must have a corresponding place among the attributes of man. Hence the Saviour would have all be merciful men, as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke vi, 36). Beautifully does the immortal poet bring out this truth when he says:

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed—
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown."

A glorious scene is pictured by the evangelist of what shall come to pass on the last day, when the merciful acts of man shall receive their reward at the hand of the eternal Judge. When all the nations from the four winds of heaven shall be in solemn waiting in the valley of judgment, the Saviour, clothed in the majesty of His power, shall come in the clouds of heaven with the countless legions of angels in His blessed train. He shall call together His elect from all nations, and tribes, and tongues, and shall place them at His right hand, the post of honor, highly befitting a chosen generation and a royal priesthood, destined to share with Christ His kingly throne (I Pet. ii, 9; Apoc. iii, 21), and in words of ineffable love He will address them the blessed sentence which will confirm them forever in bliss: "Come ye, blessed of my father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv, 34).

And this is the reward of merciful deeds. For the Saviour will say to them: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me." And He will remind them that as long as they did those merciful acts toward one of His least brethren on earth they exercised their mercy toward Him (Matt. xxv, 35-40). The merciful deeds here referred to are corporal works of mercy; but these are not the only works by which this heavenly virtue is manifested. There are also the spiritual works of mercy—seven in number. And if these corporal works are so efficacious to win the eternal friendship of God, must we not hope to receive still greater marks of His favor, and a still richer reward, by exercising those merciful means by which our fellow-being is assisted in obtaining

that which is infinitely more valuable than earthly goods—the salvation of his immortal soul. As the soul is more precious than the body, as heaven is high above earth, as eternal happiness transcends all gifts of time, so the spiritual works of mercy are higher and nobler than all other merciful deeds. In them we co-operate with God in His eternal and merciful plan for the salvation of souls.

In seven different ways may we assist our fellow-being to attain eternal happiness—the blessed end of his creation. Thus, the spiritual works of mercy are ordinarily seven in number, namely, to instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offenses willingly; to comfort the afflicted; to pray for the living and the dead.

To instruct the ignorant is a work which is specially meritorious. Man, made to the image of his Creator, naturally thirsts after knowledge. To assist him in that noble calling is to raise him up above brute force and to conduct him to his ultimate end by making him conformable to the divine type after which he was fashioned.

To counsel the doubtful, to give good advice is a spiritual work of mercy which is often fruitful of much good. It is the outcome of wisdom—a special gift of the Holy Ghost. God was pleased when Solomon made a choice of wisdom of all the excellent gifts which were at his command. And the Lord said to Solomon: “Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life nor riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but has asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment, behold I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart, insomuch that there had been no one like unto thee, before thee, nor shall arise after thee. Yea, and the things also which thou didst not ask I have given thee” (III Kings iii, 11-13). Joseph gave good advice to Pharaoh when, through the knowledge with which God had blessed him, he unfolded to him the mystery of his dreams, and brought to his notice the wisdom of laying by one-fifth of all the fruits of his kingdom during the seven years of plenty, in order to have sufficient provision made for the seven years of famine which were to follow, and which were to consume all the land (Gen. xli).

When we admonish the sinner we are acting the part of one who, through his timely interference, would prevent a brother from falling over the brink of a yawning precipice. Superiors are bound in justice to correct those under their charge. To them God speaks

by the mouth of the prophet Ezechiel: "If when I say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die, thou declare not to him, nor to speak to him that he may be converted from his wicked ways and live, the same wicked man shall surely die, but I will require his blood at thy hand" (Ezech. iii, 18).

Those who are not superiors are not bound by any obligation in justice to correct evildoers. But the divine law of charity obliges all to admonish an erring brother when it can be done without prejudice to oneself and with profit to the erring one.

Our blessed Lord gives a beautiful rule to go by when our fellow-man stands in need of correction: "If thy brother shall offend against thee go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear then, tell the Church" (Matt. xviii, 15-17). And he assures us that this is a work of mercy most acceptable to Almighty God—the one in which He himself takes special complacency. Indeed, He tells us that at the happy tidings of the conversion of a sinner the whole court of heaven rejoices with a jubilee of exultation (Luke xv, 10). The holy apostle St. James brings the same truth home to us when he says: "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways shall save his soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James v, 20).

To bear wrongs patiently and to forgive offenses willingly are acts of mercy sanctified by the divine meekness of the Saviour, "who when he was reviled did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly" (I Pet. ii, 23). In fact, this beautiful virtue was so marked in His every act that it would seem that His whole life was set before us as one continued act of meekness for our example. It is this heavenly virtue, so congenial to His divine heart, which He himself particularizes when He calls upon all to learn by His example: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi, 29). The glorious proto-martyr St. Stephen gave a shining example of this beautiful virtue when his enemies were stoning him to death. The last words on his dying lips were a prayer for his executioners: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii, 5-9). And he saw his reward even when his appeal for his murderers was still

ascending to the throne of God. The bright portals of bliss were opened to receive his blessed soul, and he saw Jesus Christ, not sitting, but standing to receive him, on the right hand of the glory of God.

Joseph's conduct toward his hardhearted brothers, who sold him in the land of Egypt, is another example of the divine virtue of meekness. When high and mighty in the kingdom of Pharaoh, and they were supplicants at his feet, he did not avenge their former cruelty, but freely forgiving them received them with the tender affection of a brother, loaded them with the choicest gifts.

Showing sympathy toward an afflicted fellow-being and condoling with him in his sorrows is another virtue singularly mirrored in the life of the Saviour. His divine heart went out to every affliction of suffering humanity. There was no human sorrow but had an echo in His compassionate heart. The grave of Lazarus witnessed his tears; the home of Martha and Mary His condolence and consolation; the house of the widow of Naim that comfort which dispelled the gloom of sadness and the relief which chased away the shadow of death. In the hour of deepest mourning He visited the house of Jairus and restored to him the joy of his old age which death had already claimed a victim for the tomb. To the valley of sorrow at the pool of Bethesda He brought a sunshine of gladness by his tender compassion for the most neglected in human affliction. In a word, the boundless compassion of His Sacred Heart, like a vast and limitless ocean, poured itself out to soothe human troubles. There is no virtue which finds a deeper response in our nature than this godly virtue; the sufferings of an afflicted fellow-being never fail to awaken sympathy in the human heart.

"One touch of nature makes all the world akin." But it is not the sympathy that we feel, but the comfort that we bring to our suffering brother that is meritorious before God, and receives its eternal reward as an act of mercy.

Prayer for the living and the dead is the special office of the saints. They continually make their appeal in our behalf before the throne of God. "And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of the saints" (Apoc. v, 8). Again, "And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censor; and there was given him much incense that he should offer

the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God" (Apoc. viii, 3).

St. Paul assures us that our prayers for all men, particularly for kings and rulers, and all those who have authority over us, is most acceptable to God (I Tim. ii, 1-3). We are told in the book of Machabees how the valiant and holy man of that name had sacrifices offered for the sins of the dead; and the inspired writer adds "that it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins" (II Mach. xii, 43-46).

The holy man Abraham most perseveringly prayed for the people of Sodom that the avenging hand of God might be withdrawn and the impending doom of the sinful city averted (Gen. xviii, 23-32). Moses, the intrepid leader of Israel, interceded with God for his people when their sins cried to heaven and the divine anger was kindled against them (Exod. xxxii, 12, 13). The whole Church prayed without ceasing for the deliverance of the prince of the Apostles when the wicked Herod laid sacrilegious hands on him and cast him into prison (Acts xii, 5).

Christ, at the sorrowful moment of parting on the eve of His Last Supper, prayed for His disciples and for the whole Church; and His appeal in their behalf to His heavenly Father is one of the most beautiful and touching discourses on the sacred pages. Let us always exercise this act of mercy toward all, and besides bringing upon others the blessings of heaven, we ourselves shall share with them the blessed gifts that we invoke from the throne of God.

In concluding this discourse on the spiritual works of mercy I wish to particularize that one in which in a special manner we co-operate with God in the salvation of souls—the one by which we raise the creature up to God by bringing God home to the creature. It is the teaching of religious instruction—the Catechism. A knowledge of the principal mysteries of religion is absolutely necessary to all. Faith is the gateway to eternal life. The patriarch Jacob saw in a mysterious vision a ladder whose foot was planted on earth and whose top rested on the portals of heaven. On it the angels found a passageway extending from time to eternity. Even such a passageway is faith, which, as St. Paul says, comes from hearing the word of God here below, and which carries the soul high above the mists of mortal gaze and mortal understanding, and opens before her the veil of eternity. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. x, 17). The mysteries of religion must

be taught. Hence the necessity of religious instruction. It is, in the first place, a necessity of means, for faith which comes by hearing is the only means of knowing God and His holy law; and, therefore, without it the gateway of heaven is closed (Heb. xi, 6). Religious instruction is also a necessity of precept.

On the beautiful day that the Saviour was taken away from mortal gaze in the clouds of Olivet, was not His last loving command, His parting address to teach all nations the mysteries of religion: "Going therefore teach ye all nations" (Matt. xxviii, 19). And this parting injunction of the Saviour was not a new command. At this last solemn meeting of the Apostles He only repeated what He already commanded when He first called them together around Him, when He convened them to the first synod over which He presided. From that first apostolic convocation He sent them to preach the kingdom of God (Luke ix, 1, 2). And the charge which He assigned to the Apostles on that eventful day, and repeated on the mountain of Ascension, He assigns to His Church, teaching on earth to the end of ages (Matt. xxviii, 20).

How beautifully expressed in the ecclesiastical institutions of Benedict XIV is the sacred duty of imparting the knowledge of God! In his ordinance we read: "We command all those to whom has been committed the care of souls that on all Sundays and other days of obligation they teach the Christian doctrine to the children under their charge." Again we find in the magnificent pastoral letter of this holy pontiff a beautiful exhortation to pastors to remind parents and guardians of children of their obligation, under pain of eternal condemnation, to see that their children and wards are well grounded in their knowledge of the Christian doctrine. The great pontiff would remind such parents of the beautiful example they would give by leading their children by the hand to Sunday Catechism, and remaining with them to listen to the sacred teaching; and thus to drink in, in their declining years, the full understanding of many things which did not dawn on them in their youth; or to revive the memory of what the lapse of years tended to make them forgetful of. Let all who co-operate with God in the sacred work of imparting His knowledge to men rejoice in the promise of the eternal reward spoken of by the prophet Daniel: "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. xii, 3).

XLVIII. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS; THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself."—Mark xii, 30-31.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—The distinction between the way of the commandments and the way of the counsels. The Church provides the means for the highest spiritual life. The evangelical counsels—the eight beatitudes summed up as a way of perfection. The perfect way may be followed both without or within the religious orders.

1. *Poverty.* Different interpretations of poverty. All designed to produce detachment. Detachment a means to greater love of both God and neighbor.

2. *Chastity.* The difference between observance of Sixth Commandment and practise of virtue of chastity. Its value is in the will power or love produced.

3. *Obedience.* Implies so much self-denial. Christ the model. The virtue is something more than mere observance of the law.

4. *Poor in spirit.* A beatitude for all classes. Means that the right use of creatures is the price of spiritual riches.

5. *The meek.* Meekness, not weakness, nor callousness, nor indifference. But power over self which implies power over others.

6. *They that mourn.* The mission of sorrow. Not a good in itself, but a condition of good. Its constancy. Its function.

7. *Thirst after justice.* Justice, the knowledge of God. The hunger increases the more it is fed. Only the light of glory enables us to see everything.

8. *The merciful.* We are to see God in our neighbor as well as beyond the stars. To bear another's burden is to fulfil the law of Christ.

9. *The clean of heart.* The difference between purity and singleness of aim. Physical integrity the symbol, not the essence of purity.

10. *The peacemakers.* Christ the great Peacemaker. Co-operators in this work, therefore, the children of God. True and false peace.

11. *Persecution for justice' sake.* Difference between the saints and the body of the faithful only one of degree. The modern substitute for persecution and correlative suffering.

One of the most elementary and most evident facts of the spiritual life of the Catholic Church is the great variety in the goodness of her children. There is a clean line drawn between what is sinful and what is not sinful. This line is represented by the Ten Commandments. The various acts which the Church considers to be sinful are grouped in ten divisions, as it were, which divisions are named

after the commandments of the old law. According to the nature and circumstances of the various sins they have different degrees of malice, and may be either mortal or only venial. But however venial or slight a sin is the Church can never tolerate it. According to her teaching there is no temporal calamity which can be counted as bad as the smallest sin. Here, then, is the limit which the Church has set to the action of her children: they must keep within the law which forbids sin.

On the other hand, the Church places no limit as to the degree of goodness at which her children may aim. Nay, she provides for them a way which, if followed, leads to the highest degrees of holiness. Those who live striving merely to avoid sin are said to be following the way of the Commandments. Those who strive to lead a higher life are said to be following the counsels of perfection. They are indeed obeying the commandments of Christ, but such commandments are of a different nature from the Ten Commandments of the law. To disobey the latter would be sin; to disobey the former would be no sin. The command to enter and follow the way of perfection partakes rather of the nature of an invitation in so far as any punishment is concerned for the non-acceptance of the invitation. It is against all sense of justice to punish a person for not availing himself of a privilege. But when there is a question of reward for the obedience of the command, then the call to the higher life may be looked upon as a commandment. A commandment implies obedience, and obedience implies merit. For the sake of the merit, therefore, we enter upon the way of perfection. We regard ourselves as the subjects of Our Lord and Master, and as such we submit to His higher commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Here, then, we have two general principles which are to be as guiding lights along the narrow way: love of God and love of our neighbor. But Christ does not leave us merely with general principles. He comes to us with a truth, and also with a way and a life. He shows us the way by applying truth to life. The three evangelical counsels and the eight beatitudes are an unfolding of the two great commandments.

The Church provides special means for the carrying out of the

counsels to the highest degree possible. She has arranged those wonderful institutions which we recognize as religious orders and congregations. There the practise of poverty, chastity and obedience takes place under special vows. The rules of the respective orders are so many external graces helping the members to practise the virtues. But these virtues are by no means confined to the religious orders. When a good soul, whether in religion or in the world, has once resolved to strive for something better than merely abstaining from sin, he has entered upon the perfect way, and he may avail himself of the helpful counsels of Our Lord.

The first of these counsels is that of poverty. Christ loves with a special predilection those to whom He offers this counsel. The young man of the Gospel had asked what he might do to receive life everlasting. Christ had reminded him of the Ten Commandments. All these, the young man declared, he had observed from his youth. Then did Our Lord call him to the way of the counsels, beginning with that of holy poverty. "And Jesus, looking on him, loved him and said to him: One thing is wanting unto thee: go, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

"Follow *me*." The counsel is to imitate the poverty of Jesus himself. He has passed through all the experiences of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Nay, He has left heaven itself, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." The virtue of poverty is interpreted in different ways, both within and without the religious orders. But whatever outward form the virtue takes, whether it is not having money, whether in wearing rough clothes, whether in eating plain food, whether in devoting one's riches to religious purposes, all these are but the means of giving expression to the spirit of detachment in which the essence of the virtue consists. The object of holy poverty is to enable those professing it to love God more and to love their neighbor more. They must, therefore, be able to say with St. Peter: "Behold we have left all—and have followed thee;" which being interpreted is: "We have turned away our minds and our hearts from all that could stand between us and thee."

The counsel of chastity must be clearly distinguished from the Sixth Commandment. It means much more. The Sixth Commandment forbids all sins against holy purity. This implies a cer-

tain amount of self-control, a self-control moreover in one of the strongest appetites in human nature. Now the counsel of chastity goes so far as to require abstinence even in the things which are lawful. The holy Sacrament of Matrimony provides a state of life for those who are not fitted for this abstinence. But for those who feel called to the renunciation of the joys of wife and children there is provided the religious state. It is possible for people to take the vow of chastity outside a religious order. Such, however, are quite exceptional cases. They are very rarely allowed by spiritual directors and should never be undertaken without the consent of one's confessor. Our Lord has said expressly that this renunciation is a special gift of God, nor is it given to everyone. "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. . . . He that can take, let him take it." The vow is taken in order to enable the person to love more. And love is will-power in action. It is not, therefore, the mere physical state of remaining unmarried which makes the vow of chastity so beautiful, but rather the will-power or the love which is required in order to maintain such a state faithfully.

Holy obedience completes the triple cord. If poverty is characterized by strength of will in one direction, and chastity in another, obedience is characterized by strength of will in all directions. It implies acts of self-denial at every turn in life. Its perfection, of course, is obtained in a religious order where the subject yields his own will to that of his superior. But the virtue itself can be practised by all, whether lay or religious. The life of Christ is the pattern for all; and Christ "was made obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Here again we must distinguish clearly between the way of the commandments and the way of perfection. The due observance of the law is obedience, but not the counsel of perfection. The counsel of perfection means obedience in things in which we are not bound to obey. In the religious this takes place chiefly in the act by which he surrenders himself to his order. In the secular it is in those manifold acts in which he conforms to the wishes of superiors even though he knows that the superiors could not or would not enforce their wishes.

The first beatitude emphasizes the root meaning of holy poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This blessing is offered to the millionaire even as the crossing-sweeper, yea, and to the crossing-sweeper even as to the millionaire. The amount of one's wealth in hard cash is only an accident

of the virtue of holy poverty. The millionaire may have the poverty of spirit, while the crossing-sweeper may be devoid of it. The virtue consists in the attitude of mind and in one's moral conduct in regard to material wealth. Am I so absorbed in the quest for wealth, am I so taken up with "the bewitching of trifle," am I so dissatisfied with my social position, that I have no time for the thought of things of heaven? If so, then, of necessity mine is not the kingdom of heaven. Only when one has recognized what is meant by the right use of worldly possessions, that they are to be held as so many talents lent by God, that they are to be devoted to the service of God, that they are to be devoted to ourselves only in so far as they help us in God's service, only then can one realize that poverty of spirit is the condition of enjoying life in the kingdom of heaven. The first beatitude, therefore, proclaims the law by which spiritual wealth is obtained, namely by detachment and renunciation of inordinate desire for temporal wealth.

The second beatitude proclaims the counterpart to this law: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." It is those who are strong in the spirit, those who have striven for the mastery over self who are the real powers among men. Meekness does not mean weakness or want of character. Our Lord was eternal meekness made manifest in the flesh. Yet, what a command had He over the powers of the world! How His meekness and gentleness baffled the machinations of the scribes and Pharisees! See how perturbed is the high-priest Caiaphas when in answer to the charges Jesus holds his peace! And behold how distressed is the governor Pilate, when in reply to the testimonies brought against Him Jesus answers never a word! The Lamb of God is also the Lion of Judah. Meekness, then, is not callousness of disposition, nor indifference to, nor yet fear of stronger physical power. It is the control of our lower instincts which have a tendency to rebel against all unjust aggression. By exercising this control we manifest a spiritual power mightier than the brute power which is opposed to us. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." By letting our moderation or self-control be known to all men we make them realize that we have a strength which must be respected; by seeking first the kingdom of God and His justice all these things are added unto us; by cultivating the virtue of meekness we come to possess the land.

In the midst, however, of both wealth and poverty, yes, and in

the midst of both spiritual riches and spiritual destitution, the angel of sorrow comes to make a sojourn from time to time. He has a holy mission. He brings mourning into every house, because only through mourning can man receive certain blessings which God has in store for him. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Sorrow is not good in itself. It is only a necessary condition of after good. It is a remedy by which the will is strengthened and directed into conformity with God's will. In its remedial value, therefore, the blessedness of sorrow consists. The toiling masses need to hear this Gospel preached more and more. Philanthropic effort, social progress, economic evolution will do much to ameliorate the conditions of their life. But always there will be a residue of sorrow remaining. It may be well to have an ideal Utopia at which to aim. It is quite necessary to fix our minds on that heaven where there will be no sorrow, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. But never may we forget that here we have no abiding city and that the sorrows which God permits to come to us are providential. They are a beatitude, for they are a condition of the comfort of eternity.

The blessing of sorrow is, as it were, the blessing which weans us from things of earth. Its function is rather negative than positive, remedial in sickness rather than strong food in health. The next beatitude supposes that we have taken the turn for the better, and helps us to get deeper into the life of the spirit. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill." The inspired writer of the book of Wisdom tells us what this justice is. It is the knowledge of God. "To know thee in perfect justice." We stand on a mountain peak and we watch the ranges of lesser heights roll on to the distant horizon. The view satisfies us because it is something more vast and more majestic than anything we have seen before. Yet at the same time it leaves us longing—we want to know what is beyond the horizon. So is our thirst after the knowledge of God. The more we know, the more we want to know. There is an ever receding "beyond." "He is always above the point of the horizon which we have reached." It is quite right, then, and a healthy sign that we should have theological difficulties. It shows that we are living the life of the spirit within us and that we need to explain that life in intellectual formularies. But we must not be impatient if we only partially succeed. Complete success only comes by perseverance to the end.

The hunger and thirst after justice increase in their intensity according as they are provided with more knowledge. The perfect satisfaction comes only with the light of glory by the aid of which we see God as He is. "For with thee is the fountain of life; and in thy light we shall see the light." "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure."

We thus think of God as immeasurably distant from us. The all-satisfying joy is in the future and in the world to come. We must also recognize God in our neighbor, and through the instrumentality of our neighbor we must show our kindness to God if we will avail ourselves of His kindness to us. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." St. Paul summed up this law very concisely in his letter to the Galatians: "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so fulfil the law of Christ." These words sounded very strange in pagan ears. They did, however, excite interest. But as for some modern Christian ears the words would seem hardly to have reached them. The besetting sin of these "good folk" is to be hard on a fellow sinner. They fondly imagine that because they conform to certain recognized good religious practises which their neighbor ignores that therefore they are the possessors of the blessings of heaven, while their neighbor is destitute of all. Vain imagination! It is only the merciful who shall obtain mercy. The woman who was guilty of adultery found more favor in the eyes of Christ than the unmerciful Pharisee.

The complement of this generous disposition toward our neighbor is the keeping of a pure heart in order that we may have a clearer vision of God. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." This vision in the present life is only through the aid of earthly shadows and images. But it may be made ever more and more distinct by the cultivation of purity of heart. The purity of heart here spoken of refers primarily to the avoiding of all sins against the Sixth Commandment. Progress, however, in this direction must, of necessity, lead to a purity of heart in a much wider sphere. The self-conquest needful for the acquisition of the virtue of holy purity induces a habit of mind which regards the whole of life in the light of God's law. It was a holy virgin from which the Word took flesh and thus came and dwelt among us. Virginity, then, is the symbol of highest chastity. The reality symbolized is cleanliness of mind. "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory."

The virtue and its reward is the right of the whole generation, young men and maidens, old men and children, the married, the widows and the single. Virginitv of mind from this moment henceforth, that is the purity of heart which is the condition of the vision of God.

"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Christ was the great peace-maker. To the woman healed of an issue of blood, trembling and distraught with clashing emotions, He said: "Go in peace and be thou whole of thy disease." And when Mary Magdalen hung back from the accusing presence of the proud Pharisee, Christ said to her: "Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." And again when the disciples were troubled and frightened at His appearance among them after the Resurrection He spoke to them: "Peace be to you, it is I, fear not." As He had come to them so He would have them go to the world. "Into whatsoever house you enter first say: Peace be to this house." In so far, then, as we carry peace to the world we are doing the work of Christ, we are making ourselves worthy to be called the children of God. We must distinguish, however, between true peace and that semblance of peace which is purchased at the cost of principle. Peace does not mean giving in to every strong opposition, right or wrong. Christ counseled no such peace. Even the Prince of Peace said: "I came not to send peace but a sword." There are occasions when true peace can be obtained only by fighting. And when principle clearly points out such a course of action then the fight must be faced.

The last beatitude has been called the beatitude of the saints. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." From the time of St. Stephen until now there have not been wanting those who have been willing to suffer for the faith. Indeed this is the lot of every professing Christian. The difference between the suffering of the great body of the faithful and that of the saints is only one of degree. We have not the privilege now of going to rack, thumbscrew and gibbet, but we have ample opportunity of devoting our time, our substance, our talent for the cause of justice. If we are persecuted in our corporate capacity by governments which take away from us our schools and thus impose upon us the duty of providing other schools we must not shirk the inconveniences which are involved. That is our opportunity of self-sacrifice. The more personal and individual persecution which may come to us from time to time is much more

easy to bear, for it carries with it a sense of martyrdom which gives strength and courage. There is more pleasurable excitement in a few days' imprisonment for the sake of the faith than in doubling our subscriptions to voluntary schools for the sake of the faith. The beatitude, however, is only for those who suffer for the sake of justice, not for those who suffer for the sake of their own glory, nor of their own fads, nor of their own eccentricities.

XLIX. THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

BY THE REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

"What is the good thing of him and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins."—Zachary ix, 17.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—The relationship between Catholic teaching and life. Exemplified in the relationship between cloister life and teaching of the Blessed Sacrament.

Argument.—*I.* The nature of contemplation. Contemplative life of religious only different in degree from contemplative life of every Christian. Analogous nature of contemplative knowledge of God. Acquired only by a sympathetic knowledge of creation. "Notional" as distinguished from "real" knowledge of God. The "notional" is made "real" not by crushing human affections, but by ordering them rightly. The Catholic contemplative life thus becomes one of growth, expansion and development, as opposed to the Buddhist contemplative life, which is one of suppression and annihilation.

II. The source of this life and energy is the Blessed Sacrament. Christ, who is received, sets free the whole of the soul's capacity for love. The Sacred Passion here symbolized furnishes the soul's strongest motive power. Unity of love signified especially adapted to convent life.

III. Historical continuity of connection between religious life and devotion to Blessed Sacrament.

Peroration.—Outward worship the symbol of the real inward contemplative life. Real contemplative life implies a well ordered all-embracing charity. The greater the right love of creatures, so much the greater is the true love of God. To be the faithful bodyguard of the Lamb on earth is to merit to be the bodyguard of the Lamb in heaven.

An argument for the truth of the Catholic Church is the harmony between her teaching and her life. So intimate is the connection between Catholic doctrine and Catholic practise that we find it difficult to say whether the practise is the outcome of the doctrine or the doctrine of the practise. Most probably they were born together and grow together, each being the support and justification of the other. We come now to consider one special phase of Catholic life, the life of the cloister; and with that phase of Catholic life we may associate one part of Catholic doctrine, the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. The two have a most intimate relationship; for the Blessed Sacrament is the source and nourishment of religious life, while religious life consists of the service and praise of the Blessed Sacrament. The whole is one of the fairest and most beautiful fea-

tures of the Catholic faith. It would seem to have been symbolized by the words of the prophet Zachary: "For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins."

The highest exercise of religious life is the exercise of loving contemplation. It is the soul's embrace of God. The soul seeks for God, learns all it can about Him, and then having conceived Him as fair and good beyond all thought, tends toward Him and loves Him as its greatest joy. All other virtues are but ministers to contemplative love. Contemplative love is the very crown of every act of religion.

It is not the exclusive privilege of those few who bind themselves to God with the threefold vow: it is the duty of every Christian. The difference is only one of degree. Since, however, the greater multitude of men, from the nature of the case, must be occupied chiefly with the activities of life, it is fitting that a few select souls should be set apart for a more intense, a more frequent, a more advanced life of contemplation. Let us see, then, what the profession of such a life implies. In the first place, then, the contemplative's knowledge of God is not a knowledge of Him as He is. All knowledge of God on this side of the grave must be as through a glass in a dark manner. Ordinarily it does not even reach to that knowledge which certain of the saints possessed, the knowledge gained in ecstasy. But it is a knowledge which must be obtained by laborious study and experience. It is a knowledge which must be acquired by going first to the things of the world, and seeing in them the reflection of God's goodness and God's beauty. The old philosophers of the Church used to speak of nature as impressed with the footsteps of Almighty God, as if God had passed by leaving the marks where He had been. But whatever figure we use, certain it is that all created beauty bears some vague resemblance to divine beauty.

The contemplative, therefore, ordinarily speaking, must go to the things of creation for her knowledge of God. One source of this knowledge is the science of theology, or to give it a more modest name, instruction in Christian doctrine. That, of itself, may have little or no effect in exciting love. Cardinal Newman calls it a "notional" knowledge of God; and he distinguishes it from another knowledge of God which he calls "real" knowledge. This "real" knowledge is that which is obtained from actual experience. It is one thing to have read the life of a hero or a saint; but it is much

more to have seen, to have known, or to have lived with one. So also is it with the contemplative's knowledge and love of God. She does not retire from the world and shut out from her heart all thought of family and of friends in order that she may have more room for God. If she does thus close her heart, then her love of God is a poor thing. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" No! The right ordering of contemplative love is by means of the natural loves which God has given us: they are the rungs of the ladder of heaven.

Here, then, is the great beauty of Catholic religious life: it means the expansion, the cultivation, the perfection of every natural faculty and every natural affection. It does not stifle, but it spiritualizes them; for the supernatural can only be built on the natural. The eastern contemplative has his monastery or convent, as the case may be; but there the object is to crush nature, to annihilate it, to merge oneself in Nirvana, the great Nothingness. The Catholic contemplative has her convent, but there the object is to live a higher and nobler life, a life of grace, a life of special friendship with God. She goes about, as it were, from flower to flower. She tastes the sweetness of a father's love, of a mother's love, the love of a brother, sister or friend: it is all so much sweetness to add to the store of divine love. "Inasmuch as you did it unto these you did it unto me."

See, now, how this love is begotten and nourished by the Blessed Sacrament!

In the sacred humanity of Christ there is the human expression of all the loveliest and most attractive attributes of Almighty God. In the sacred humanity of Christ there are all the fairest and noblest attributes of human nature raised to the highest perfection. The soul, therefore, that receives Christ in holy Communion receives that which can set free all its capacity for love. It draws near to the Blessed Sacrament clothed with the habit of charity, and the Blessed Sacrament converts that habit of charity into the many varied acts of love of which the soul is capable. "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me." That is, in so far as the soul is capable of the higher life—and love is the highest form of life—that life is called into action by the partaking of the Blessed Sacrament. Again, the Blessed Sacrament sets before the soul the highest motive of love. It is a representation of the Sacred Passion of Our Lord. That Passion has been set before the world as the highest expression of love. Hands outstretched, head inclined, side opened: His whole

form breathes out love and calls for love in return. "We love Him because He first loved us."

Once more, the Blessed Sacrament is the symbol of the love and unity of the members of the Catholic faith. St. Augustine suggests the thought that as the bread is one whole made out of many grains of wheat, and as the wine is one whole drawn from many grapes, so all we are one in Christ. "O mystery of affection!" he says, "O sign of unity! O bond of love!"

But these effects, one may say, are the effects produced on every soul who worthily receives holy Communion. What, therefore, is their special value to the contemplative nun? It is this: they have a special value according to the condition and needs of those who receive them. Just as we saw that every Christian is called to some degree of contemplative love and is consequently helped thereto by the Blessed Sacrament, so the Blessed Sacrament is proportionately effectual in enabling the contemplative nun to respond to her higher vocation.

Therefore it is that we find the contemplative orders ever practising a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It is Our Lord's fairest gift to men. It is the corn of the elect. It is wine springing forth virgins.

If we would seek the beginning of this devotion, we must go back two thousand years to the interval between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The sacred tomb had opened to receive its precious treasure. The body of Christ lay there, deprived of its human soul. There Our Blessed Lady came and knelt in adoration. There, too, came the holy women to anoint the body with sweet spices. The worship and the ministry of Our Blessed Lady and the holy women is perpetuated by the nuns of the contemplative orders. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Divine Office are the outward expressions of that ministry. The various exercises of the holy rule: spiritual reading, meditations, visits, chapter, and so forth, are the external helps to that service.

After all, however, these observances are but the shadow and the Sacrament of the actual real religious life. The real "stuff o' the very stuff, life of life, and self of self" is the internal active principle of charity: a charity wide and deep: not a charity which embraces all creation in general and nothing in particular; but a well-ordered, intelligent, discriminating charity, a charity which begins at home, the home which one has left equally with the home which one has

adopted. Then, as it grows, it may spread itself wider and wider, from the nearer affections to the more distant, eventually despising nothing; for there is no creature under the sun that does not in some way tell of God's glory. And in proportion as that love of creation is cultivated, in so far as the contemplative nun can put herself into sympathy with human nature, in so far as she can appreciate the delicacies, the refinements, the sensitiveness of the human heart: so far is she capable of the highest act of her vocation, the contemplation of the beauty and the goodness and the truth of God. Those moments of contemplation will be the happiest of her life, but they will not be altogether satisfying. Why? Because they are but a foretaste of the greater joy beyond, the joy of the Beatific Vision. To be the faithful bodyguard of the Lamb on earth is to win the privilege of being the bodyguard of the Lamb in heaven. "These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God."

L. THE SOCIAL DRAWBACKS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"The heaven of heaven is the Lord's, but the earth he has given to the children of men."—Ps. cxiii, 16.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Contrast between reward promised in this life for observance of the Old Law and that promised for the observance of the Christian law. The Christian religion does not promise wealth or worldly prosperity. These things often fall to the wicked. Religion judged by the standards of success employed in the world, viz.: material utility. Hence religion is thrown aside.

II. Religion is indeed a handicap to worldly success. This is because: 1st. Our Lord's kingdom is not of this world. 2d. Because it compels men to attend to the spiritual at the cost of the temporal. 3d. Because the civil law sanctions certain methods of success that must be reprobated by the Christian standard. 4th. Because all who aspire to perfection must renounce the world.

III. 1st. Religion restraining man causes him to be pushed aside in the race for wealth. 2d. Makes man contented with little in his desire to serve God. 3d. Diminishes the relative importance of this life; shows the nothingness of the joys of this world.

IV. Christ foretold that the world would hate Him and His followers. History proves the truth of the predictions. This is the most important drawback to the success of the God fearing.

V. 1st. Still religion, though painful, is not discredited. 2d. Faith and stability are tried by these things. 3d. One who would reign with Christ must suffer with Him. 4th. With Christ we can do all things. Recall His promises. Be faithful whether He blesses or chastens.

I. In the sacred Scriptures we find two very different classes of earthly prospects held out to those who are faithful to God's commands. The reward promised to Israel was peace, prosperity, wealth, comfort, triumph over their enemies, world-wide and enduring dominion. To the Christian Our Lord holds forth the expectation of persecution, hatred, calumny, despoilment, exile and death for His name. "In the world you shall have distress" (John xvi, 33). When He promises the meek that they shall possess the land, He indicates rather that land which is future and spiritual. How is it that the sanctions of the two laws are so different? One law is the development and fulfilment of the other; one God has given them both in pursuance of the same objects; the principles of each covenant are the same; there can be no contradiction be-

tween them. Surrounding circumstances, however, differ, and so the results are unlike each other. When a whole community obeys the divine law this must conduce to their temporal advantage; but when a small number dispersed among alien communities observe a higher and spiritual law, it will place them at a disadvantage, will draw a line of separation between them and others, and expose them to suspicion and ill-treatment that they must not resent. The law in itself may be such that its general observance will bring social blessings on the community; and yet when a few only observe it, it may result to their temporal disadvantage. Now the Christian community is a small body in the midst of a hostile world, and offends it daily by all its views and practises; naturally, then, the reward they look to, and the sanction of their law, will be supernatural rather than material and natural. The Jew of old might look to the land flowing with milk and honey, the Christian must look rather to the heaven of heavens, which is the Lord's, and not to the earth which is given to the sons of men. At present let us consider how the Christian law works that temporal disadvantage to its adherents which Our Lord foretold, and how individuals may find it an obstacle to their prosperity. In another discourse we shall see how Christianity furthers the temporal interests of a community when it is faithfully observed.

When the devil led Our Lord "into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," he said to Him, "To thee will I give all this power and the glory of them; for to me they are delivered, and to whom I will I give them" (Luke iv, 5, 6). And indeed it would seem as if this was the case. Already in the Old Testament, though temporal rewards and punishments were especially the sanction of that law, the prosperity of the wicked over the just was noticeable and was a trial to the faith of God's servants. Job says, "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked" (Job ix, 24). The Psalmist describes the pride and arrogance, the evil words and thoughts, the blasphemies of the wicked, and at the same time their exemption from the labors and the scourgings of other men. "My feet were almost moved, my steps had well nigh slipped; because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners. . . . Behold these are sinners, and yet abounding in the world they have obtained riches. . . . I studied that I might know this thing, it is a labor in my sight; until I go into the sanctuary of God, and understand concern-

ing their last ends" (Ps. lxxii, 2, 3, 12, 16, 17). The prophet Jeremias asks: "Why doth the way of the wicked prosper; why is it well with all them that transgress and do wickedly? Thou hast planted them and they have taken root, they prosper and bring forth fruit. As a net is full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit; therefore are they become great and enriched" (Jer. xii, 1, 2; v, 27). Much more is this likely to be the case under the present dispensation; which is more spiritual and less material than the former. We have no ground for expecting differently. The life of our crucified Master, all His teaching, the history of His Church and its spirit, all concur in showing us that we must not expect of religion that it will give us individually wealth and worldly prosperity, and that we must not be surprised if these fall principally to the unspiritual and the unscrupulous.

Yet this is a lesson hard to learn. Even the followers of Our Lord would like to see His kingdom coming "with observation." We can not help desiring to see poetical justice and retribution apportioned in this life, and visibly, where they are deserved. We know indeed that God does not justify His judgments during the present life; nor, on reflection, do we desire to have our reward here. Our knowledge that the day of judgment will rectify all temporary injustice enables us to endure it now with patience. Yet often the feeling may arise that the fitness of things and the demands of justice are violated here, and some may even be tempted to say, in the words of the prophet Malachy: "He laboreth in vain that serveth God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked sorrowful before the Lord of Hosts? Wherefore now we call the proud people happy, for they that work wickedness are built up; and they have tempted God and are preserved" (Mal. iii, 14, 15). Or according to David's temptation: "Then have I in vain justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent. And I have been scourged all the day" (Ps. lxxii, 13, 14).

It is no wonder that worldly minded and irreligious men judge of religion by the standards which belong to worldly things. They have no ideas higher than profits of percentage, and they measure all things by these. The inner life, union with God, the restraint of nature by grace, these are phrases without meaning to them. They can not help looking at religious principles as if it was question of their value in the market, and they inquire what is the immediate material result of them. All that is spiritual is superstitious;

all that is unworldly is unprogressive, unsuitable to the times. If a religious population remains poor, that is taken as a proof that its religion is a failure. The Catholic Church is condemned by them because it does not show the qualities which belong to a banking establishment, to a technical school, a scientific congress, and a board of trade. They can not believe any institution to be good or true, which is subject to the disadvantages which Our Lord has presaged for His own, which draws men off from the possession of this world, and places them at a disadvantage in the pursuit of wealth and position.

Those who aspire to have part with Our Lord in His kingdom must be prepared to accept this fact, that their religion will be an obstacle to their getting on in the world, that it handicaps them heavily at the starting, and that the irreligious man often prospers while the faithful suffers. This was the case with our blessed Lord. He lived in poverty and labor, He was rejected by every class, He died in ignominy, absolutely crushed by his victorious enemies, precisely because He was the Holy One of God, and because He called men to a spiritual, unworldly and divine life. We are not to suppose that He endured all this in our stead, but it was to show us what we must be prepared to endure, and often must actually endure. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt. x, 25). St. Paul also warns us that we can not escape temporal evils if we would "live godly in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. iii, 12). The whole of the New Testament abounds in prophecies and examples of the persecutions, hatred, calumny, opposition, restraints, disabilities, losses, suspicion, ridicule and other evils, which are to follow those who are consistently and thoroughly faithful to Christ.

II. 1. Our Lord's kingdom, as He himself stated, is not of this world. It is indeed for the benefit of the world, not only spiritually, but temporally: its influence can penetrate to every department of life and advance all the interests of men; but its primary and direct aim is spiritual; its objects are not those which the perverted world seeks, and its methods are not those of the world. The world strives after riches, dignity, comfort, power, pleasure: Our Lord bids us renounce these if we would be perfect. We may seek them only as a secondary object, and then not with eagerness; and we shall find their proper use a matter of difficulty, and their mere possession a danger. The man who is to

succeed eminently as one of the world, needs pride, ambition, self-sufficiency, unscrupulousness, greed, falsehood, ruthlessness, self-will; qualities any one of which excludes him from the kingdom of heaven. In every detail of action, in every opinion, in every feeling, the successful man, according to the world's ideal, differs most widely from the man who is modeled after Christ Jesus. Whoever, therefore, is under the influence of Christian principle is to that extent incapacitated from keeping pace with those who have no such incumbrance to stay them.

2. The man who has but one object, and who devotes all his energies to that, will succeed much better than he who divides himself between two. His attention is undivided; only the necessary qualities are brought into play, and they are stimulated to the highest efficiency. If a man has two different pursuits to work at, he will succeed at neither so well as if it was the only one. If these two are widely different, the case is worse still; and if one is much more important, and demands a greater share of attention, it will be so much the worse with the other. So it is with the Christian man who has to make his way in the world and provide for his future and his family. He needs to work hard at his temporal interests, and yet he must give the chief place to his spiritual ones. On the one hand he can not aspire to the same perfection as the religious who is vowed to the three counsels; on the other hand, he will not be able to accumulate wealth like him who thinks of nothing else, and allows nothing to distract or deter him from his object.

3. The positive laws of religion impose restraints which are a continual obstacle to the conscientious man. He is commanded to love his neighbor as himself, to do him no injury; he is forbidden to labor incessantly, to lie, to rob, to deceive. The observance of these primary laws places the Christian at a certain disadvantage, interferes with his profits continually, and closes certain walks of life effectually against him. The civil laws of each country make a certain pretense of protecting men's rights and putting down dishonesty, but they only interfere with a few of the cruder forms of crime, those which are chiefly popular among the poor. But the politician, the speculator, the manufacturer, the employer of labor, the ruler of a great empire, the popular writer, the man of pleasure, find vast domains of crime free and open to them without the penalties of the law or the reprobation of their compeers. The straight path to wealth, power, success, lies through these domains, and only

the few religious men hesitate to use it. When we think of the tyranny, the oppression, the cruelty, the misuse of power, the conspiracies for evil, the cajolery, the violence, the insatiable greed, the falsehood, the dishonesty of all classes, from monarchs to hucksters, we need not be surprised to hear honest men complain of the difficulty of making head among them; the wonder is that an honest man can live at all. He needs to be a man of great faith and firm principle to forego these means of advancement which are used by his rivals with so much effect, and with perfect impunity, as far as men are concerned.

4. Besides these positive laws of the Ten Commandments, there are counsels of perfection, not binding on all men, yet not without a considerable influence even on ordinary Christians. There are also various recommendations which go to make up the Christ-like spirit, and which must be taken into account by all who would be perfect. Thus the renunciation of all property, of one's own will, and of the domestic life, constitute the highest state in the Church. A great virtue constantly inculcated is humility, which is the opposite of all self-assertion, self-sufficiency, self-seeking, ambition, obstinacy, independence; that is to say, the qualities which are considered to command success. The Christian ideal is in the virtues of the eight beatitudes, poverty of spirit, meekness, peacefulness, patient endurance for justice' sake. Again take other maxims thickly scattered through the Gospels. Love others as yourself. Seek no revenge. Submit to injustice. Turn your cheek to the smiter. Yield up your coat to him who takes your cloak. Go two miles with him who forces you to go one. Return good for evil. Speak well of those who speak ill of you. Never do evil that good may come. Seek always the lowest place. Keep your good deeds secret. Sacrifice yourself for others. Seek first the kingdom of God, and leave material interests to chance, as the world would say. How different these from the world's maxims of success! Look after yourself. Charity begins at home. Give nothing for nothing. Get rich, and never mind the means. Money is power. Consider the great fortunes and other great successes that have dazzled the eyes of mankind, and see how few of them have been gained except by trampling under foot every Christian principle and every Christian virtue and every human right, and then judge of the disadvantage under which a conscientious and Christian man must always labor.

III. Religion is the most powerful stimulus to energy. It acts continuously and does not cease when a man's own wants are satisfied; it tends to make one's action more conscientious and thorough, less selfish and less narrow in aim. Yet on another side it does tend to close certain sources of energy which are most active among worldly men.

1. Restraining, as it does, selfishness and anxiety, and substituting for them reliance on God, contentment, and certainty of knowledge, it will make men's exertions less feverish, less despairing, less grasping. This tranquillity would be better for all in the long run than the fierce struggle for existence and destruction of the weaker that actually prevails; yet as the feverish rush does prevail, the tranquil worker runs the risk of being shouldered aside and deprived of part of his proper chances.

2. Religion makes men contented with what they have, and to that extent less aspiring after more. The Old Testament teaches us thus: "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasures without content" (Prov. xv, 16). The New Testament says: "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee" (Heb. xiii, 5). And again: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and certainly we can carry nothing out. But having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content. They that will become rich fall into temptation and into the snare of the devil. . . . The desire of money is the root of all evils" (I Tim. vi, 6-10). Religion gives men more confidence in God and diminishes their exclusive self-reliance; it makes them look more to God's blessing than to their own exertions; and makes them feel that in the last resource God will provide for them. Such is the spirit of the Psalmist: "The Lord ruleth me and I shall want for nothing. Cast thy care upon the Lord and he will sustain thee. He will not deprive of good things them that walk in innocence" (Ps. xxii, 1; liv, 23; lxxxiii, 13). And Our Lord more precisely bids us put aside all solicitude as to future provision for our food, and drink, and clothing, and to trust that God will supply us with what is necessary as need arises, seeing that he provides for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.

3. The certain prospect of another life has very great force, It

diminishes the relative importance of the present life. It is no profit to gain all this world if we lose eternal life. There is no pressing need to get all possible enjoyment here when infinite happiness awaits us after death. The good things of life can not have supreme value for a man who knows they can not last more than a short time. Poverty and lowliness are not the worst evils to these who look to the happiness of heaven. Nor are even intellectual goods of much more consequence than material ones. Those who certainly possess the highest supernatural knowledge need not trouble themselves about the process of gaining it, and can afford to be indifferent to inferior kinds of knowledge. They can not be so unsettled and so troubled about acquiring further knowledge, as those who have absolutely no certainty on the most important subjects, and who are worse than ignorant—who are in doubt about the terrible truths that the majority of mankind believe. Men whose minds are molded by religious truths and aspirations, can not possibly fling themselves into the struggle for temporal things with the same ardor, thoroughness, unrestraint, and success, consequently, as those who have no knowledge or desire of anything beyond this life, and who feel that this is their only chance of possession and enjoyment.

IV. More terrible than all other drawbacks is that penalty of Christianity foretold by our blessed Lord: "You shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake" (Matt. xxiv, 9). Only that Our Lord endures it with us it would be the counterpart of the curse of Cain. There have been many times when the Christian could truly say: "I shall be a vagabond and a fugitive on the earth: everyone therefore that findeth me shall kill me" (Gen. iv, 14).

There is an innate and incurable antipathy in the world against the children of God. In all countries and all times the good have been objects of suspicion, mistrust, and enmity to the careless and the wicked. Every canonized saint of God has been a conspicuous victim; and everyone who intends to serve God faithfully and save his soul, must be prepared to meet the hatred of many and to suffer in his temporal interests for his spiritual convictions. The sentiments of the unjust toward the just man are expressed in the book of Wisdom: "Let us oppress the poor just man. . . . Let our strength be the law of justice. . . . Let us, therefore, lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary

to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the Son of God. He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's and his ways are very different. We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstaineth from our ways as filthiness. . . . Let us condemn him to a most shameful death" (Wis. ii, 10-20). Such is the spirit which the sons of God must encounter as a rule. It may be toned down for a time, or kept hidden, but it is generally ready to break out when occasion offers. Taking the world all round, there is perhaps no crime, indiscretion, or misfortune which is more likely to stand in a person's way, and be brought up against him, and bring him into trouble, than the fact that he is a true, fervent, energetic Catholic. Even where regular persecution is impossible, it may be that a Catholic will have no chance in public life; even where public life is open to men of ability and integrity there will be still a terrible amount of petty suffering, coldness, suspicion, insult, and temptation to be encountered by the obscure and dependent. There are, of course, notable exceptions in large districts, or in long periods, or in numerous individuals, to this state of things. Very many have got on well, gained general esteem and a good position, but it has been for the most part in spite of their religion. Just in like manner a blind man may become a minister of state, but no one could say it was on account of that defect; it was in spite of it, and because exceptional talent had neutralized it. The brave man who stands up for his religion through thick or thin gains general respect even from his enemies; but he is not exempt from suffering penalties for his religion, though he is respected because he has borne them with constancy. This antipathy of the world to the servants of God is perhaps the most serious drawback out of many to their comfort and prosperity.

V. We have now seen that the Christian religion when fervently followed is, in certain respects, an obstacle to a man's temporal well-being. Let us now conclude with a few brief reflections on this truth.

I. This is no discredit to religion. It does not become essentially noxious because in individual instances it has painful consequences. Unspiritual men may indeed reject it because it weights them in the race of life, and because, as they say, it does not pay. But the

real utility of a thing is judged by its wider effects; and on another occasion we shall see that the effect of Christianity in the long run is to promote all the interests, civil, material, educational, as well as the moral and spiritual interests of men.

2. The present condition of things, as just pointed out, is a trial to our faith and stability. It serves the double purpose of proving the steadfast and weeding out the worthless. The insincere man and the coward put their principles and convictions out of sight, they beg to please men instead of God, and they try to get the most they can out of this world, hoping to secure the next as well. But the disadvantages of sincerity force them to choose one side, and cut them off, with the inheritors of their insincerity, from the Church of God.

3. We must not expect to escape the drawback of our privileges. If we wish to share the glory of Christ, we must remember that the Cross is associated with that glory. We can not expect to have the best of this world and the best of the next. We must resign something here, as the price of fullness of all good that we aspire to hereafter.

4. We must not be dismayed at Our Lord's words: "In the world you shall have distress," for he adds immediately afterward, "but have confidence, for I have overcome the world" (John xvi, 33). If His followers had to encounter unaided all the obstacles that we have considered, few indeed would have any chance in this world. They would be too heavily weighted to compete with any success. The chances against them are certainly enough to terrify any who have not a most heroic trust in God. It requires a high degree of virtue to walk alone in the darkness with no visible guide, and it is no wonder that many are incapable of it, and that they think it absolutely necessary for their existence to be unfaithful to God and to trust in human prudence. But God is mindful of His promises. He makes as though He had abandoned us, but it is for the testing of our faith; He rewards us after He has tried it, and He will not allow the temptation to go too far. He will not deceive those who have trusted in Him; and to those who have abandoned human prudence for His sake He will render a hundred-fold even in this life. The fact that so many of His servants succeed, and that they succeed so well, contrary to all anticipation and probability, is due to God's special care for them, and is often an **evident** fulfilment of His promises. Fix those promises in your

mind and often recall them, especially when tempted to despond on account of present difficulties or future uncertainties. Stand by God and He will stand by you. Trust in Him and you will never be confounded. If He bless you, be thankful: if He chasten you, remember that this makes you more secure of an eternal blessing.

LI. THE SOCIAL ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIANITY

BY THE RIGHT REV. JAMES BELLORD, D.D.

"The Lord commanded that we should do all these ordinances, and should fear the Lord our God, that it might be well with us all the days of our life.

And he will be merciful to us, if we keep and do all his precepts before the Lord our God."—Deut. vi, 24, 25.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Christianity gives its reward in the next life; yet it is not out of harmony with man's best interests in this life. It is always capable of renewing the face of the earth. It is the remedy for all the evils of the body politic or social. Its work ever impeded, yet ever succeeding.

II. The power of the spirit of Christianity not appreciated by the worldly. Yet the Christian law produces its effect for good in the long run. No law of God is ever violated without entailing some punishment. This may be delayed; but it comes in the end with greater severity. Hence the best nation and the best citizen is the one that lives up to the law of God.

III. All history a living witness that the principles of Christianity are the safeguards against national decay and make for national prosperity. Examples: Jews and our own times and nations. This holds true in the world of politics, of social life, of commercial life; of science; of education.

IV. Conclusion.—While the few may receive a setback by the working of Christian laws, nations as a whole are advanced. Society built on the corner stone which is Christ receives stability, uniformity, morality and engenders confidence, charity, respect. Hence must make progress and permanent advancement.

I. The reward of the just is not in this world, but in heaven. Here they must expect labor and suffering as they work out their salvation. They will be tried by God in the furnace of tribulation, they will suffer from the infirmities of their own nature, they will be persecuted by the enemies of God. The world is given not to them, the sons of God, but to the sons of men. Even the highest of God's gifts, His own religion, will be a source of trouble to them, and an obstacle to success in those temporal pursuits which they are bound by their condition to follow. Christianity, they will be told, is not adapted to the needs and the progress of the world at this day. And to some extent this is true. It is not adapted to present needs and progress, as these are conceived and worked out by the world at large: its methods are not those of human prudence; its objects are spiritual, so it is not first of all an apt instrument

for worldly objects. Yet it is not out of harmony with man's highest temporal interests, such as peace, contentment, good order, knowledge, moral life, happiness. If it were an obstacle to these and hindered their progress, then there would be a serious deficiency in it, arguing against its truth and divine origin. But such disadvantages as it has do not rise from its own nature; they are from special circumstances that impede the action of Christianity; and they are confined within narrow limits. They amount only to this, that a faithful minority in the midst of a hostile majority will be placed, in certain respects, at a material disadvantage.

The Christian spirit in itself is perfectly adapted to the work Our Lord assigned it, *viz.*, to renew the face of the earth. It is the source of all life and good to mankind. Like the root of a giant tree, it supports the massive trunk of human life, and sends the vital fluid through every branch to all the leaves and blossoms. Commencing with the spiritual being of man, it transforms his moral life, and extends its benefits to the intellectual and the material life. To disregard it or to stop its influx, is to open the gate to calamity of every kind. For all the evils of the body politic or the body social the remedy is to be found by re-establishing communication with Christianity and with Jesus Christ: "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts iv, 12).

The Christian spirit has always to go on struggling with obstacles. The spirit of Satan takes a new form in every age, as it is subdued in its previous forms: the spirit of paganism, of violent persecution, of insidious ridicule, of heresy, of moral corruption, of false science, of criticism and unbelief—all these are manifestations of one and the same anti-Christian spirit. As with Jesus Christ Himself on earth, so with His Church: its work is ever impeded, and even for a time, here and there, entirely checked. Yet it ever struggles on, flourishes vigorously, on the whole, and shows its wide beneficial effects in man's temporal affairs; by degrees its principles get to prevail through the unceasing action of noble Christians, and, though not attributed to their true source, the Church of God, they still become productive of beneficial effects.

II. The power and the utility of the spirit of Christianity are not recognized by the superficial glance of the worldly minded. Irreligious and immoral action seems to present more immediate advantage; and few are unselfish enough to sacrifice a present and personal gain or pleasure for that which is future and useful prin-

cipally to the community. The world has discovered that honesty is the best policy, but it has not learned that the same is true of all moral and religious virtues. Dishonesty is always the best policy for the few and, for a short time, it always leads to a present gain; nothing else is so effective for heaping up quickly an enormous fortune, provided the plan is new and outside the reach of the law. But when it is found out, and when everybody practises it, all confidence is destroyed, profits are swallowed up by the cost of protection against it, and greater losses follow. But it is well that the worth of Christianity as a policy is not recognized. If it were, multitudes would indeed be attracted by it, but their homage would be selfish, insincere, and hypocritical. The glory of the Christian religion would be eclipsed if it were regarded generally as a means toward gain, and if all worship, and prayer, and belief were no more than a worldly policy. It is well, then, for the due sifting of the sincere from the insincere, that the immediate results of un-Christian action should be profitable in a temporal sense. The world may pride itself on the progress which results from casting off the trammels of religious faith and obedience. It may exult against God in its long impunity, and think it has successfully defied His wrath. "Who seeth me? Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me. Whom do I fear? The Most High will not remember my sins" (Eccli. xxiii, 26). But vengeance will come at last; it is slow, but it is certain, and it is inexorable; the same passage continues: "This man shall be punished in the streets of the city, and he shall be chased as a colt, and where he suspecteth not he shall be taken. . And he shall be in disgrace with all men because he understood not the fear of the Lord" (Eccli. xxiii, 30, 31).

Nothing is more certain than this, that false principles must result at last in unfortunate consequences. Goodness may not always meet with its due reward and recognition, but the violation of law always induces its penalties; and the violator always learns "that it is an evil and a bitter thing to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. ii, 19).

There is a unity in all law. The law of nature is the law of God; all laws have a certain dependence one on another. Violate the religious law, and the moral law has no longer a firm foundation; disregard this, and in due course you will learn of other laws by the punishment their violation brings. Thus there are laws of the

human mind, laws of commerce, laws of population, social laws, economical laws, sanitary laws. They are the laws of God under various aspects. In regard to these it may be truly said that "who-soever shall offend in one point is guilty of all" (Jas. ii, 10), because, as so often happens, those who violate God's positive religious laws, despising the sin and the future consequences, find that some economical or other laws have been violated also, whence great present evils follow. There is delay in the punishment, and in the meantime the evil principles go on spreading and developing their progeny, and preparing some vast calamity. Prospective evils may be veiled by the immediate advantage which has been gained, and when they come they may not be attributed to their proper source; but not the less truly are most temporal ills the punishment of irreligion. For a long time pride and injustice, fraud and ambition, greed and cruelty, lust and unbelief may go on, and prosperity may continue in a country; but the sins of many become at last national sins, the public conscience is depraved, right and wrong become confused together, society is undermined, commerce is deranged, serious political errors are made, and a country becomes rotten to the core and is brought to the brink of ruin. The gradual rejection of Christianity is accounted to be progress, but it is a progress toward a frightful gulf. One day that Scripture will be accomplished which says: "Because . . . you have despised all my counsels, and have neglected my reprehensions, . . . sudden calamity shall fall upon you, and destruction as a tempest shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you" (Prov. i, 26, 27). And again it is written, "Thou hast plowed wickedness, thou hast reaped iniquity, thou hast eaten the fruit of lying, because thou hast trusted in thy ways, in the multitude of thy strong ones" (Osee x, 13). In spite of the present advantage which comes to the unscrupulous and the worldly, in the long run the advantage is with those who observe the laws of God. The happiest nation will ever be that which is most Christian in its institutions and in the habits of its people. The best means, on the whole, of securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number lies in regulating men's lives according to the life of Christ. The most powerful engine of civil order is a religious education. The best citizen will always be the man who is the best Christian; the most faithful to his engagements and self-sacrificing in his country's cause will be the man who is faithful to God and his conscience.

The best preservative against moral, civil, and commercial evils is the confessional. The great instrument of civilization and real progress is the Cross of Christ. It is all summed up in the verse from Proverbs: "Justice exalteth a nation, but sin maketh nations miserable" (Prov. xiv, 34).

III. The principles that we have been considering will furnish us with a philosophy of history. We may trace their operation in the general course of events, and in the varying fortunes of each country, and in the actual social and economical conditions of each. The principles will help us to understand many things which are problems to others, the causes of evils, the effects of certain courses of action, probabilities as to the future. We shall be able to follow the uniform purpose of Divine Providence which runs through all times and all occurrences. Thus the history of the Jewish people of old shows us much the same succession of events that we should find in any other history. There is a record of its growth from one family into a tribe and into a nation; of its consolidation, the development of government, the partition of the kingdom, internal dissensions, foreign wars, alliances, victories, calamities, till we come to its decline and extinction. But these were not the mere fortuitous ups and downs in a nation's life depending on complex causes; they were all in accordance with a definite law laid down by Moses and recalled by the prophets; they were the direct consequences of the nation's obedience or disobedience to the religious law. The principles of the divine rule do not vary: they are the same for Jew and Gentile, for ancient and for modern peoples. In one case only have they been formally revealed, but from that we learn what they are and how they will operate in other cases. Let us cast a brief glance at a few particular instances out of many possible ones, and we shall find that religion imposes certain restraints on us which at first involve transient disadvantage, yet that, in the long run, revolt against these restrictions induces great calamities.

1. In matters political God has laid down for Christians a certain line of conduct; to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, to be subject to higher power for conscience sake, recognizing it as a delegation of God's own authority; to endure with patience when that power is abused and turned to our oppression; to render homage even to wicked and unjust rulers, and to leave the rest in the hands of God. This was a serious limitation placed on the action of

Christians in an age when power was frightfully abused : it left them at the absolute mercy of tyranny, as it precluded them from using the general remedies of those times, *i. e.*, revolt and assassination. Many lost property and life with no prospect of being avenged, or even of their brethren or children profiting by their sacrifice. Yet in the long run it did good. Christians gained credit as a peaceable, law-abiding race ; and the whole body became imbued with that respect for authority and law which was the first necessity in establishing a new social and political system. At the present day the Christian political spirit has been supplanted to a wide extent by a new spirit, that of revolt. It is impatient of all restraint, it will endure nothing, it respects no authority as such, it prefers sudden violence to the prudent moderation of religious counsel ; it looks for the remedy of all wrongs to the "sacred right of insurrection." In a time of civil troubles, when a population are endeavoring to establish their just liberties, or even their right to their lives, and are drifting into unlawful methods, a fervent Christian is placed in a most anxious and difficult position. He finds himself unable to take part in secret societies, violence, injustice or rebellion ; yet to refuse not only exposes him to personal peril and isolation from his fellows, but prevents him from defending his rights, and perhaps what are dearer to him than all personal rights, the liberties of his native land. He is called to sacrifice the prospect of an immediate and transcendent gain and trust blindly to the ultimate advantage of God's law. Very many have failed under this supreme trial, and have preferred the present advantage of revolution. But with what result ? Violence has engendered violence. They have sought to destroy some evils of the social body, but they have perhaps destroyed all social order. They have subdued one set of tyrants, but they have raised up a worse. They have pulled down instead of reforming, and find themselves unable to build up ; every principle of cohesion has been lost, all civic virtues have perished, and the country hurries toward destruction.

This destroying spirit originated in past generations from other sacrifice of the divine law to expediency. Religion while concentrating the ruler's authority instructed him to rule his people with justice for their good. It exalted him, but reminded him that his subjects were, before God, his brethren and his spiritual equals. It commanded subjects to obey, but protected them from tyranny ; controlling their ruler, and even at times declaring them absolved from

their allegiance. Monarchs resented this restraint as an indignity, though it was the best protection of their class by helping to keep them within the bounds of respectability. They threw off at times all sense of duty, violated every right their subjects possessed; chained down or suppressed religion lest it should control their caprice. But the suppression of religion left the impulses of their subjects uncontrolled as well; and instead of the measured voice of religion, the tumultuous voice of an enraged populace passed sentence of deposition on offending dynasties. The forces of nature, having no longer the divinely appointed outlet for their action, erupted in the form of revolution. The attempts of monarchies to prevent religion from maintaining the rights of subjects only led to a general overthrow of authority, in the struggle to regain, without the control of Christianity, the Christian inheritance of liberty, equality and fraternity.

2. In the last discourse we saw how Christian principles tend to check the exorbitant admiration for wealth and greed for it, to give dignity to poverty, and make men contented with it, and thus to form an obstacle to unlimited enrichment. This has caused indeed a temporary loss in individual cases. Fortunes were not so great as they might have been made; many remained poor who otherwise might have become rich. But on the whole the result was for the temporal advantage of the majority. Wealth was more equally diffused, though the total was less than nowadays. There were fewer wants, and they were more easily supplied. There was not the fierce struggle for existence that we see now, and the poor were not so mercilessly crushed. There was not the same striking and excessive contrast between classes, nor the wide separation of feeling; there was more fraternity, less envy, less contempt, and so, less hatred and hostility. In Christian times rich and poor stood side by side with mutual good offices; under the commercial spirit they stand opposed as enemies, only restrained by force from open warfare. There is no longer any unity of spirit binding the members of one nationality together; and poverty, the state of the majority, has become the greatest problem and the greatest danger to social order. Greed has become the motive power of life. All men thirst for wealth; but while only the few can enjoy it the vain desire for it is the torment of millions.

3. Again in the domain of commerce we have an example of the same truth. Here even many men of the world will agree with the

Christian, that dishonest smartness, while profitable to a few at the outset, will in the long run prove less profitable than uprightness. But this view will never find popular acceptance. When men disregard the divine command, "Thou shalt not steal," they are not likely to practise honesty on the faith of a proverb; and if it comes to a question of policy, they will prefer the individual to the general policy, and go in for dishonesty and greater profits. The frequent success and the great rewards of dishonesty will always be sufficient to attract large numbers; but in the long run nothing can be more calamitous than this disregard of the divine law. The dishonesty of a few will discredit a whole community, confidence ceases, and industry is disorganized. Everyone tries to give the least and to get the most. Employers cheat their customers and overwork their laborers; these retaliate, scamp their work, and do the least possible for their pay; differences arise, each party strives to starve the other out, production ceases, and enormous losses fall on the community. How different it would be if Christian principles prevailed; if all, or even the majority, were honest and trustworthy, if men worked their best and hardest for the love of God and sense of duty without compulsion, if all gave full value for what they received, if all the expenditures wasted on supervision, and spying, and detecting, and punishing, could be devoted to men's support. The present losses through dishonesty and the sums spent in preventing other losses would be sufficient to support in comfort all the half-starved, over-worked populations of the earth.

4. Religion is very frequently represented as obstructing scientific investigation. The current statements to this effect are absolutely false. Christianity has always been learned and scientific. She, too, says, "*Nil humanum a me alienum puto*," all that concerns human life or thought is of interest to her. She has been the nursing mother of science; she preserved and revived learning, she primed gradually the mind of Europe, she taught the methods which in time produced the present marvelous results. All that she has done in the way of restriction amounts to this: she teaches that mundane physical science is not the most necessary, the most sacred, and the most irresponsible of all things, nor its rights supreme above all other rights; but it is susceptible of being wrongly used, devotion to it may run to injurious excess, like devotion to any other of God's creatures; all knowledge is not expedient for every man, and, if it is injurious to his faith or morals, a man is better without it; indeed,

a man can attain to his highest development as man without the aid of any natural science. Due guidance and moderation in pursuit of knowledge are necessary to men. Further, religion possesses a certain body of truths which she has received, not by way of critical investigation and scientific discovery, but by revelation from God. She presents these to us for our humble acceptance and reverent meditation, and she will not admit the capacity of the human intellect to sit in judgment on them to choose or reject. She is the sole and unerring guide, and her teachings are above question or discussion, for she speaks the words of God himself.

This attitude of the Christian Church, the attitude which belongs to a divinely appointed teacher of men, has given rise to the fiction that she is the enemy of science. Her influence tends to reduce the superstitious importance that many attribute to mere human knowledge. It will happen doubtless that those who possess an absolutely certain knowledge will be somewhat indifferent to the wavering speculations of men; grasping the highest object of intellectual research, they will be less interested in methods of reaching secondary objects. The habit of easy belief may become more natural to them than supercilious incredulity. Some, perhaps, may have been stayed in their investigations by timidity, and may not have gone so far as they might, and so have missed some possible discoveries. Yet at the most the losses through such restraints are but little compared with the benefits which the Church has rendered to culture—benefits that have been amply proportioned to the practical requirements of each age.

What has been the result of casting off all guidance and restraint and rejecting all truths that lie outside the range of the natural intelligence? There has been a more exclusive ardor and greater daring in investigation, and wonderful physical discoveries have been made which would probably have been made in any case. But the highest and most necessary truths have been lost, truths that were eminently practical, which satisfied the inquiries of the mind, revealed the secrets of man's destiny, explained the mysteries of life and death, gave support in moments of trial, elevated the mind, purified the character. All this is gone. Man is confronted by mysteries insoluble and terrible, there is no guiding star in his life to show the goal or the path to it, he flounders hopelessly and aimlessly through the mire, his life becomes a melancholy burden and a mistake.

5. The demands of the Church in regard to religious education, though not a hindrance to education, weight the Catholic body very heavily in providing for it. In almost every country the state provides an excellent but merely secular education at a small cost. The Catholic finds himself unable to share in the privileges accorded to all citizens; he must search, with difficulty often, for the opportunity of educating his children, must pay heavily for it, and at the same time support the schools that he can not use. He suffers for conscience sake; but the community will suffer much more in the long run if it violates the natural and divine law, by educating half the faculties of its children, and those the lowest—the physical and the mental, while neglecting the moral and the religious. Already it is found in more than one community, from statistics, that as irreligious education advances, so does crime increase. It will prove in the long run that mere secular instruction does not eradicate criminal instincts, but makes them more scientific, more cautious, and more destructive.

IV. These instances are sufficient to show that the restraints and disabilities imposed by religion, while entailing inconvenience on the faithful few, are for the benefit of society on the whole, if they be observed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the stone which was rejected by the builders, is really the head of the corner (Acts iv, 11). He is communicated to us through the organization which He founded through the Catholic Church. Apart from His religion there is no stability, no uniformity of belief, no sound morality, no bond between man and man, no mutual confidence, respect, or aid, no true and permanent progress. His spirit—the spirit of Christianity—must be men's guide, not only in their dealings with God, but in the dealings of men with men, whether in the family, or in commerce, or in politics, whether in private or international relations. "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts iv, 12). To set aside Jesus Christ and this spirit, to guide ourselves by the worldly or human spirit, is to expose society to the most grievous calamities and to court destruction. There are temporary and superficial drawbacks in following Christ; there are obscurities, there are obstacles, there are losses to be encountered; there is His Cross to be borne. But the object is to test our faith, our loyalty, our courage, our love. The half-hearted and the time-serving, and the facing-two-ways will shrink before these difficulties, and will be cut off from Christ. The constant and the brave must endure with Him; but sooner or

later, perhaps partially in this world, certainly in the next, their confidence will be justified and they will share in the triumph. "That which you have," He says, "hold fast till I come. And he that shall overcome and keep my works unto the end, I will give him power over the nations . . . as I also have received of my Father" (Apoc. ii, 25, 26, 28).

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